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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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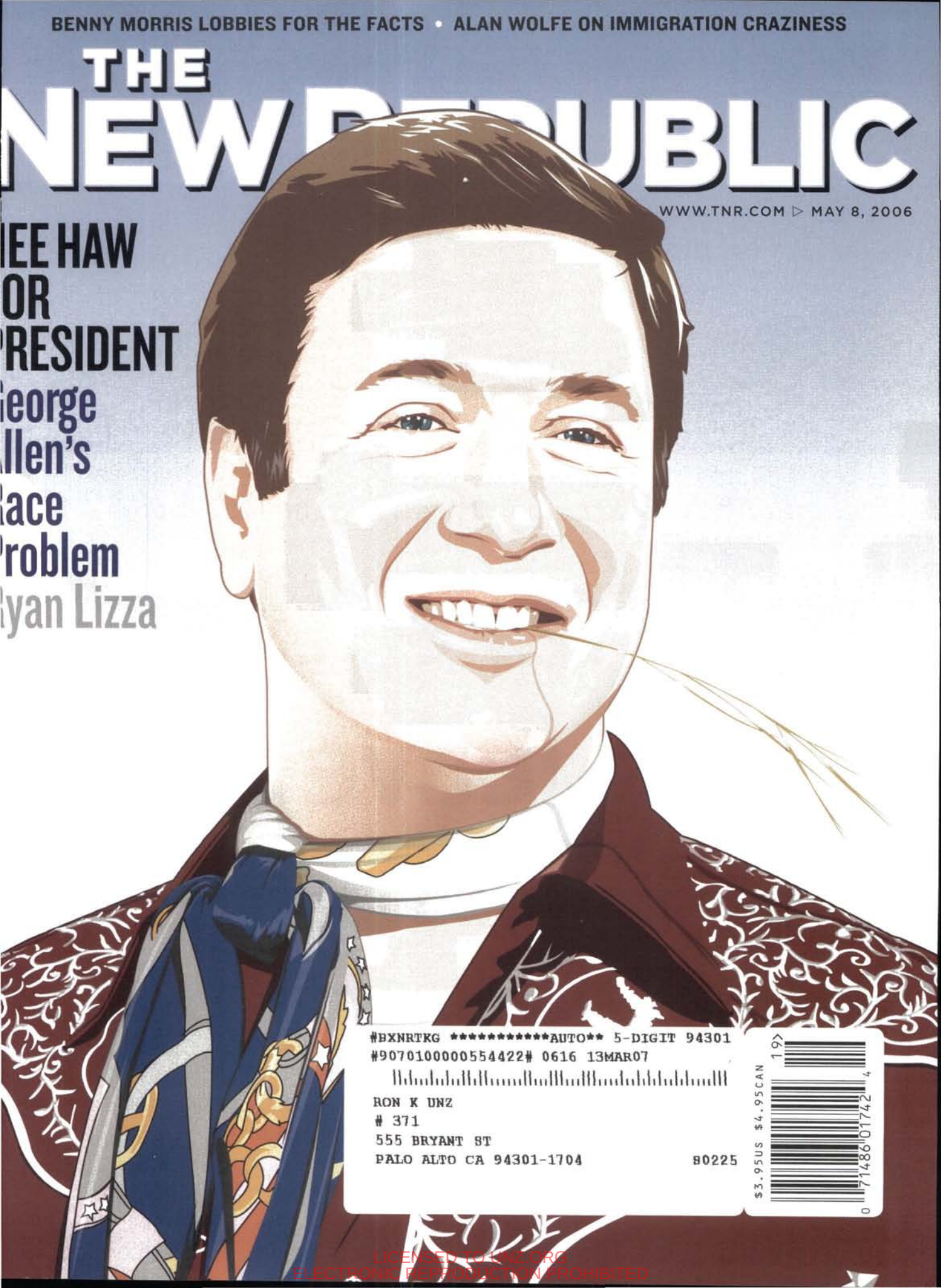

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CORRESPONDENCE

LOSING FAITH

LEAVING ASIDE THE UNSTATED BUT delicate—indeed delicious—irony that Damon Linker joined *First Things* well *after* Father Richard John Neuhaus wrote most of the books that he now finds so nefarious (and, in fact, even after the November 1996 editorial that called for regime change in the United States), one can more directly refute his bilious screed by pointing to Western Europe ("Without a Doubt," April 3). There Linker will find a culture more to his liking—one where his anti-Catholicism will not make him feel in the least uncomfortable, and one where the ideology of birth control is virtually the very foundation of cultural morality. Of course (and for those same reasons), Western Europeans cannot be bothered to reproduce, which, in another ignored irony, leaves them exposed to the *real* theocrats: Muslim immigrants. Yes, it has become a cliché that even paranoiacs have enemies. But Linker's enemies are entirely born of the private phobias of his overheated imagination. He writes of Neuhaus's desire for "an omnivorous Catholic Church to devour and to absorb American culture and public life," as if such a thing might actually exist. Yeah, right. This preposterous claim will surely come as a surprise to Catholics in Massachusetts, where Catholic Charities suspended its adoption program rather than conform to state law requiring it to facilitate adoptions by gay couples, and to Catholics in California, where Catholic Charities has been forced to provide contraception coverage in its employee health care plan. My only surprise in reading the bizarre abjuration of his past views was that he did not quote from Maria Monk's Know-Nothing classic, *Awful Disclosures*. After all, these two professional anti-Catholics have at least this in common: They both leapt over the wall.

EDWARD T. OAKES
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DAMON LINKER'S ATTEMPT TO ALIGN Neuhaus with the German legal theorist Carl Schmitt is groundless. Schmitt defines the "essence" of politics as the job of distinguishing effectively between friend and foe; Neuhaus, by contrast, defines politics as a work ordained to the common good of persons and institutions. Schmitt contends that certain "emergency" situations call for a "commissarial [transitional] dictatorship"; Neuhaus holds to the republican form of government as precluding dictatorship in any form. Schmitt promotes a "decisionism" that divorces reason and will; Neuhaus holds that reason and will are reciprocally related. Schmitt, consequently, collapses the distinction between what is authoritarian and what is authoritative; Neuhaus does no such thing—neither in politics nor religion.

JOHN F. MAGUIRE
San Francisco, California

DAMON LINKER RESPONDS:
Before he comments further on the ravages of the "ideology of birth control," the excitable Edward T. Oakes should ponder the fact that, while Catholic Ireland and France have some of the highest fertility rates in Europe (1.86 and 1.84 children born per woman, respectively, according to current estimates), Catholic Italy, Spain, and Poland have some of its lowest (1.28, 1.28, and 1.25, respectively). Meanwhile, fertility rates in historically Protestant (and today thoroughly secular) Scandinavia are comparatively much higher (1.78 in Norway, 1.74 in Denmark, 1.73 in Finland, and 1.66 in Sweden). Contemporary Europe has its problems, but an absence of Catholic orthodoxy is not one of them. As for Oakes's dismay at my decision to distance myself from *First Things* and the authoritarian brand of Catholicism peddled by its editor-in-chief, I'm reminded of the old line about

an independent-minded parliamentarian. Accused by a political opponent of having changed his position, the legislator replied, "Yes, sir, when I discover I've been wrong I change my position. And what do you do?"

When it comes to the kinship I posited between Richard John Neuhaus's ideas and those of Carl Schmitt, John F. Maguire misses the point. I did not propose that Neuhaus understands himself to be a descendant of Schmitt's antimodernist political theology. I proposed that Neuhaus fails to provide a reasonable answer to the question of why modern men and women should submit their minds to the absolute rule of the Roman Catholic Church. And that failure places Neuhaus (no doubt unintentionally) in proximity to Schmitt, the patron saint of decisionism.

UNFAITHFUL

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN IS RIGHT TO show how Christian evangelicals

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have been trying to create new Christian communities in the Middle East at the expense of ancient ones ("Crossing Over," April 3). Ever since 1911, when the Lutheran Orient Mission Society first sent missionaries to Kurdish Iran, the Kurds in particular have been looked on as ideal converts. The mission's newsletter regularly referred to the project as "Kurdistan for Christ," and Reverend L.O. Fossum, one of the leaders of the first American mission, went so far as to translate the New Testament into Kurdish. This kind of proselytizing ambition is far from waning. Some evangelical organizations may turn a blind eye to attacks on Chaldean and Assyrian Christians (some of whom were even converted by Protestants) in part because so many of these reprisals are carried out by Kurds, who are still viewed as spiritual free agents. These organizations regretfully appear more concerned about extending their share in the Middle East rather than standing up for some of the last native speakers of the language of Jesus.

THOMAS MEANEY
New York, New York

DEAD POETS' SOCIETY

HELEN VENDLER'S STRONG REACTION to Alice Quinn's edition of Elizabeth Bishop's unfinished poems in manuscript prompts me to offer a word about our rationale in publishing the book ("The Art of Losing," April 3). The subtitle of *Edgar Allan Poe & The Juke-Box* is "Uncollected Poems, Drafts, and Fragments," which accurately indicates the wide range of material included. This is a book about the processes of creativity, about how a great writer worked; our aim was in no way to present these texts as canonical, but to let her many passionate readers—not only scholars, but anyone for whom Bishop's poetry is meaningful—learn more about how she wrote.

Vendler writes that other poets are burning their drafts, "fearing an Alice Quinn in their future." Most of them should relax. Elizabeth Bishop is generally acknowledged as one of the greatest of American poets, which means that everything she wrote is of interest. This level of scrutiny will apply to only a very, very few. Bishop's letters, edited by Robert Giroux in *One Art*, revealed much about this famously reticent writer's difficult life, and I don't think

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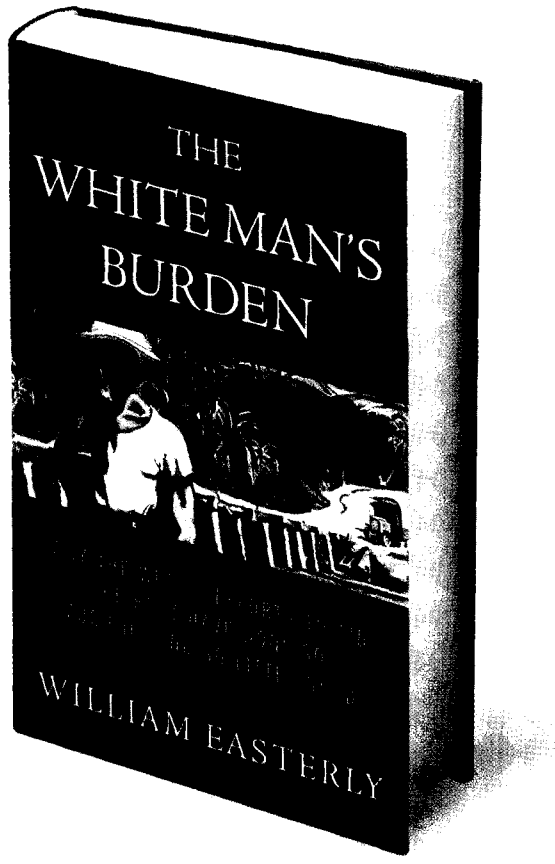

"[William] Easterly focuses his keen analytic prowess on the utility of foreign aid...[he] shows why many of the development fads of the past 50 years—the big push, donor coordination, shock therapy failed to do much good."
—*The Wall Street Journal*, **Daniel W. Drezner**

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— *The Washington Post*, **Paul Blustein**

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Deterrent Defect

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

RHETORICALLY, AT LEAST, THE debate over military action against Iran is starting to look like a rout. In recent weeks, three opinion magazines—the centrist *Atlantic*, the liberal *American Prospect*, and the neoconservative *Weekly Standard*—have all published articles on the subject. The *Atlantic* article, by James Fallows, ends with this categorical statement: "Realism about Iran starts by throwing out any plans to bomb." The *Prospect* story, by Matthew Yglesias, begins like this: "Should we go to war with Iran? The short answer is 'no.' The long answer is 'hell no.' " Not exactly subtle.

Then there's the *Standard*. Its cover shows Uncle Sam peering at a globe that looks like a bomb. The text asks, TO BOMB, OR NOT TO BOMB? A question mark! The *Standard* defines the hawkish pole in American foreign policy debates. It proposed militarily overthrowing Saddam Hussein three years before September 11. If it's not sure that military action against Iran is a good idea, who is?

The ambivalence would be easier to understand if the *Standard* believed there were nonmilitary ways to prevent Tehran from getting a nuke. But its lead essay disposes of that possibility in the fifth paragraph. "The diplomatic process," writes the American Enterprise Institute's Reuel Marc Gerecht, "no matter how hard the Europeans and the Americans may try, is coming to a close." America's choices are military action or an Iranian bomb.

And here's what Gerecht—a prominent hawk writing in America's most famously hawkish magazine—says about the military option: "The reasons not to bomb are many, and some are pretty compelling." Iranian-sponsored retaliation in Afghanistan and Iraq, he suggests, might cripple U.S. efforts in those countries (though it also might not). If the United States bombed Iran's facilities once, he adds, it would have to do so again and again, and consider using, "at a minimum, special-operations forces," "until [Iran] stopped" trying to get a nuke. How long would such a war last? "[M]any years, perhaps a decade or more."

"All of this is frightening," Gerecht concedes. But then, having spent 90 percent of his essay describing an invasion's potential horrors, he pivots in the final paragraphs and says that, if Iran gave a dirty bomb to Al Qaeda or attacked a U.S. embassy, that would be worse. "It is best that such men not have nukes, and that we do everything in our power, including preventive military strikes, to stop this from happening," he writes. "Given the Islamic Republic's dark history, the burden of proof ought to be on those who favor accommodating a nuclear Iran."

Huh? Surely, as a general rule, the burden of proof should be on those wishing to launch a war—except, perhaps, in response to a direct attack. That burden can sometimes be met, but there's something a little sinister about suggesting that it should rest with those who *don't* want to go to war—especially since Gerecht himself has just catalogued the ramifications that a conflict with Iran could bring.

In this particular case, the burden of proof is this: Hawks must show that, if Iran gets a nuclear weapon, it cannot be deterred from using it or transferring it to terrorists. That standard shouldn't make doves rest too easy. It's too glib simply to declare that deterrence "worked" during the cold war. As John Lewis Gaddis notes in *The Cold War: A New History*, deterrence came very close to failing—not merely in the Cuban missile crisis, but during the Korean war as well. In the cold war's terrifying first decade and a half, using nuclear weapons was far from unthinkable—not only in Moscow and Beijing, but also in Washington. Doves need a theory explaining why the circumstances that allowed deterrence to unexpectedly succeed between Washington and Moscow and Washington and Beijing (and, for that matter, Moscow and Beijing) would also hold between Tehran and Washington and Tehran and Jerusalem (and, for that matter, Tehran and Islamabad). And, if doves skip this deterrence debate—staking their case on America's ability to prevent Iran from getting a bomb in the first place—they will be making a big mistake. Diplomacy is worth trying, but we shouldn't kid ourselves: It will probably fail. Russia and China won't wield sticks. And the United States and Europe have no carrots that Iranians (including Iranian nationalists who loathe the regime) want as much as they want the bomb. If doves don't argue for deterrence now, they will find themselves in an intellectually precarious position down the road, when America's options come down to deterrence and war.

But, if doves have intellectual work to do, it is nothing compared with the burden on hawks. Gerecht dismisses deterrence against Iran in three breezy sentences—and on that basis proposes a war he admits could last a decade. That's pathetic. As shaky as deterrence was in the 1950s and early '60s, it grew stronger, and leaders of radically different ideological and cultural stripes increasingly avoided the nuclear brink. Whether President Bush wants to admit it or not, the United States is relying on deterrence even today against North Korea, as isolated and nutty a state as exists on the face of the earth. If hawks want to argue that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani, and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei are fundamentally more irrational than Nikita Khrushchev, Mao Zedong, and Kim Jong Il, they will have to do better than vague allusions to "the Islamic Republic's dark history." (For all his obscene Holocaust references, Ahmadinejad has still not said anything as menacing as Khrushchev, who, in a 1958 meeting with Hubert Humphrey, circled Minneapolis on a map and told him that, as a favor, he'd spare Humphrey's hometown when Armageddon came.) Where is the evidence, in the 25 years since Iran's mullahs came to power, that threats of military retaliation don't affect their behavior? Where is the evidence that they seek martyrdom so fervently that they would risk the one thing that most regimes value above all else: survival? To be sure, Iran is a longtime sponsor of the murderous Hezbollah. But is there any reason to believe, from what we know of their relationship, that Iran's leaders would give it control of their most precious military possession? And, if the mullahs are so eager to launch nuclear weapons against Israel, why haven't they launched the chemical and biological weapons they already have?

There may be good answers to these questions. But, so far, the hawks aren't providing them. So far, in fact, they are barely even convincing themselves.

PETER BEINART

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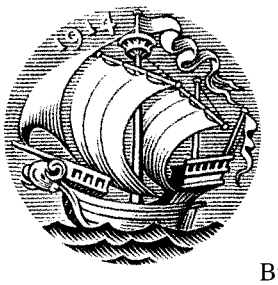
Crispy Duck

As Social Security privatization stalled and Iraq slid further off the rails last summer, the White House became a grim place to work. To buck up morale, top officials circulated a *Washington Post* story from 1985, according to a squib from *U.S. News & World Report*. The story had pronounced Ronald Reagan's administration all but dead at a similar point in its tenure. Of course, as every West Wing denizen surely knows, the Gipper recovered by passing the most sweeping tax reform bill in history. Unfortunately, the last six months have not gone quite as well for President Bush. Since circulating the *Post* story, the Bushies went on to fumble the response to a natural disaster, withdraw a Supreme Court nominee, watch a top aide get indicted, and witlessly hand a Middle Eastern government control of our vulnerable ports. Their popularity is gone, their self-proclaimed "mandate" vanished into the ether.

Often, it is difficult to know when a president has entered the state of political purgatory known as "lame duck" status. For this president, the question is no longer whether, but how lame. Political science has given us regrettably few tools for answering this question with precision. But our own qualitative analysis suggests that not since James Buchanan has a president been lamer. Second-term presidents often see their agenda stalled by gridlock. But haggling over substance at least has the excitement value of conflict and opposition. Bush, on the other hand, has seen his agenda die from within, of its own accord. The last years of Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush, and Reagan were like watching an angry traffic snarl. The last years of George W. Bush's presidency are like watching a car resting on cement blocks in the front yard.

What distinguishes Bush's predicament from that of his predecessors is a unique combination of structural and cyclical lameness. Cyclical lameness is the lameness all presidents must endure late in their second terms (or late in their first terms, if they lose reelection). It's the Bush administration's structural lameness that has made this president's lame years so stultifyingly lame. This was, after all, an administration plagued by flashes of lameness from the get-go. Back in August 2001, the Bushies had cut taxes and were on the verge of passing an education bill, at which point it was clear to anyone paying attention that the president was fresh out of ideas. Not long after, Bush's poll numbers plummeted to historic lows. True, September 11 saved ambitious White House aides from enduring years of monotony at the Crawford ranch with only the odd pickup game of Old Maid to pass the time. But it couldn't wash away the fact that our big-ideas president had remarkably few of them—and that they were all pretty lousy to boot. (Whatever happened to that mission to Mars?)



The biggest reason to be pessimistic about Bush's lame duck years is his administration's preoccupation with politics. The few former Bush administration officials who have dared violate Bush clan omertà have marveled at the White House's near-total lack of interest in domestic policy. Shortly after leaving the administration in 2001, for example, former faith-based initiative czar John DiIulio complained that pretty much every policy decision had to be filtered through Karl Rove—an arrangement that was formalized when Rove became deputy chief of staff following Bush's reelection. But, with Rove now abandoning that post to concentrate on politics full time, we may soon look back fondly on the halcyon days of politically motivated policy decisions, when at least there were such things as "policy decisions" being made.

And that's just the next six months. After this November's midterm elections, the Bushies will be one of the most pathetic species in the popular imagination: a collection of political sharpies with no more campaigns to scheme over. It's the political equivalent of an aging Hollywood starlet ... with bad skin ... and a weakness for Ho Hos. Maybe they'll still trot out some of their favorite tricks for old time's sake—say, a constitutional amendment counting a gay voter as three-fifths of a straight voter, or a campaign accusing Democrats of operating a secret terrorist cell from the House cafeteria. But their hearts won't be in it. It's all the more depressing when you realize this is the *best*-case scenario. Should the Democrats retake Congress, the end of the Bush era will consist of little more than fending off subpoenas and inventing new ways to say, "I don't recall."

"We have a thousand days to get the job done," incoming White House honcho Josh Bolten recently told his staff, apparently hoping to instill a sense of urgency. To which we can only respond: Have a thousand days ever looked longer? ■

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Cairo Dispatch

Sheik Yo Booty

BY ELI LAKE

IN EARLY FEBRUARY, as Egyptian markets were emptying shelves of Danish butter cookies and Lebanese and Syrian crowds were burning embassies, Arab satellite TV stations began playing a song called "We're Out of Patience." In Cairo, the song blasted out of stores, taxis, and gas stations, ordering the Danish illustrators and publishers of the Mohammed cartoons to go to hell, where "fire will be everywhere, burning your faces." Preceding the eternal damnation line was a friendly reminder in the form of a lyric: "Islam is a religion of love, not injustice and terrorism."

The singer of "We're Out of Patience" is a 51-year-old Egyptian named Shaaban Abdel Rahim. Shaaban's other hits—including "I Hate Israel," "Bin Laden," and "Hitting Iraq"—have catapulted him to stardom. As the Arab world's best-known "political singer," he appears regularly on chat shows and variety hours and has hosted TV specials. In 2001, McDonald's tried to capitalize on Shaaban's popularity, hiring him to sing a jingle promoting its new McFalafel. ("If you eat a bite, / you can't stop / before finishing the whole roll.") Although Egyptian radio, which adheres to a long-standing rule not to air political music, won't play "We're Out of Patience," wealthy fans can hear Shaaban sing live six nights a week at the Casino Laile, the closest Cairo gets to Vegas.

On an April morning at four o'clock, Shaaban walks onto the stage in a three-quarter-length red coat with gold buttons that barely conceals his round torso. His hair is in Jheri curls, and he wears two large gold medallions around his neck. Although he looks like he is one giant Swatch watch away from a Flavor Flav imitator, in the Arab world Shaaban is unique. Most of the tunes offered by satellite stations and websites are saccharine love songs. Popular Islam-influenced pop—such as that of Sami Yusuf, whose songs praise Mohammed and the *ummah*, or Islamic nation—does not venture into geopolitics. Shaaban's lyrics, however, are the musical form of "Law & Order" episodes—political controversies ripped from the headlines.

But Shaaban does not express views out of the mainstream—in fact, his songs are accurate indicators of Arab public opinion. For example, right after September 11, when there was sympathy for the United States in the Arab world, Shaaban sang in "Bin Laden":

> I hate terrorism of all kinds.
> I hate to see victims and blood.
> No matter Sharon or Barak.
> People want to live without destroying.

But, by early 2003, when opinion was turning against the United States on the eve of the Iraq war, Shaaban sang in another song called "Hey, Arab Leaders":

> Two faces of the same coin, America and Israel.
> They made the world a jungle and ignited the fuse.
> America spread its wings, doesn't care at all.
> No one can stop her, no one can catch her.
> Soon he will say Iran, then he will say Syria,
> but he is silent about Korea.
> About the Towers, Oh, people, definitely:
> His friends were the ones who brought it down.
> What terrorism!
> How many years are left for America and Israel
> to act as bullies?

Despite being a political singer, Shaaban is no dreary bard. As dance music, his songs are irresistible. Twenty seconds into "Bin Laden," Shaaban starts chanting, low and throaty, "binbinbinbinbin," to establish the song's tempo. After every fifth "bin," a chorus of children sings, "bin Laden." Underneath the call and response, the rhythm is established by a line of doff drums, handheld snares equipped

Eli Lake is a Cairo-based writer for THE NEW YORK SUN.

DAVID COWLES

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with small cymbals that give each beat a shimmer. And then, after the first chorus, a whirlwind of string lines and trumpets establish the counterpoint. It starts and stops, but it doesn't matter, because the listener is already bobbing his head to the "bin Ladens."

For a man who has seduced much of the Arab world with his politically resonant dance tracks, Shaaban is a surprisingly uncouth figure. Born into a working-class family, he is fond of telling interviewers that he used to iron shirts for a living in a laundry. (Shaaban's agent turned down my interview request unless I paid him more than $500. He hinted that the interview could also be obtained if I procured the services of one of Casino Laile's prostitutes.) And, although his songs reflect the opinions of a typical Arab newspaper reader, Shaaban boasts about his illiteracy. The reason for this discrepancy between the man and his music is that Shaaban is actually just a mouthpiece. Shaaban's lyrics are the genius of someone entirely different.

PRIOR TO SHAABAN, there were two kinds of political songs in Egypt, according to Kamal Mougheeth, a historian who has written extensively on Egyptian popular music. The first were sincere patriotic songs praising the leader, such as those by Abdel Halim Hafez, who, in the 1950s, wrote songs with choruses like: "Hugs to my beloved country"; "Oh, Gamal [Abdel Nasser], you are loved by millions"; and "Let's take a photo for this victorious nation." The second type, which appeared after the country's defeat in the 1967 war, was often sarcastic, underground music that was critical of the regime. Sheik Imam Eissa, a blind singer and composer who sang patriotic and popular songs before the Six Day War, recorded a blistering satire following the 1967 defeat called "Thank God," in which he sarcastically chided:

> Welcome the defeated soldiers after war.
> It's no matter we have been defeated in the Sinai,
> this defeat will not deprive us of feeling free.

Emam's music was banned in Egypt, and he had to earn his living touring other Arab countries, but he became a cult figure among college students. He was arrested in 1969 and served a brief jail sentence until Nasser died and his successor, Anwar Sadat, released him.

Shaaban's music bridges the gap between these two traditions. On the one hand, he presents himself as a truth-teller for the common man in the Emam tradition. And, yet, the message of his songs is no different than what one would find in the columns of the state-funded newspapers. Darkly alleging that Israel was responsible for September 11 in Egypt is the equivalent of railing against the evils of smoking in the United States—it's not dangerous, it's banal. Shaaban almost never attacks Arab political leaders. In fact, last year, during the presidential elections, the opposition group, Kefiya, issued a press statement blasting Shaaban for a song called "What We Know Is Better Than What We Don't," which encouraged Egyptians to vote for President Mubarak. In short, Shaaban is the Egyptian Bob Roberts.

The man who figured out how to make Shaaban's songs both popular and politically acceptable is a 39-year-old songwriter named Islam Khalil. Khalil is the opposite of the flamboyant Shaaban, the Bernie Taupin to his Elton John. When I meet him at a local theater in Cairo, where he works on musical theater side projects, his hair is uncombed and he wears a knockoff American-style sweatshirt jacket. Where Shaaban is big and jiggly, Khalil is lean and fit. During the interview, we are interrupted eight times by well-wishing actors, who hug him and kiss him on both cheeks.

Khalil met Shaaban in 1992—shortly after the first Gulf war—at a wedding. Shaaban was singing Shabi, a rhythmic and repetitive folk music, and he'd had a modest hit with "Kheisha, You're a Liar," a song about a dishonest woman whose name is the same as the burlap sacks for carrying grain. Khalil was working for the state-funded regional theater. He had written most of the songs for the original 1992 production of "Bye, Bye Arabs," which he says was a criticism of Arab disunity in the wake of the first Gulf war. Shabaan approached Khalil with an idea for a project that wasn't exactly political. "He wanted me to write a song called, 'Kheisha, You Are Truthful,'" Khalil says with a laugh.

Khalil says he originally wanted to write songs for Amr Diab, one of the biggest stars in Arabic pop music, rather than Shaaban. "He was not very famous, but he was the first famous singer who asked me to write for him, so I did," Khalil says. It took eight years for him to persuade Shaaban to go political. The catalyst was the shooting of Mohammed Al Dura, a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy who died in his father's arms during a shootout between the Israel Defense Forces and Palestinian gunmen at the beginning of the second intifada in 2000. Khalil says the images of Dura's death inspired him to do something he says he almost never does: He wrote an entire song straight through. In the late evening, he called Shaaban and sang the song's first lines, "I hate Israel, and I will say so if asked. Even if I'll be killed or imprisoned." Shaaban, according to Khalil, liked it immediately and memorized it for weddings. "People were moved by it," Khalil said of the initial response. "It was Ramadan, and everyone knew about Mohammed Al Dura." By the end of the Muslim holy month, Khalil and Shaaban went to the studio and recorded the song, "I Hate Israel," with phony crowd noises.

"I Hate Israel" became an underground sensation and is reported to have sold more than one million copies on cassette. It created a new archetype for Egyptian political

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music. It was far blunter than any of the pro-Palestinian music that was coming out at the time. The successful 2000 song "Jerusalem Will Be Ours Again," by a Live Aid–style benefit of Egyptian actors and pop stars, treats Dura as follows: "This was a little Palestine child in his house. Is it his sin? This is his history and his ancestors and his land and sky." Compare that with Shaaban, who gets right to the point:

> I hate Israel, and I hate Ehud Barak,
> since he is repugnant,
> and all of the people hate you.
> All of the time, Egypt forgets,
> and has a lot of patience.

" 'I Hate Israel' is my favorite," Khalil says. "It is the reason for my success."

SINCE "I HATE ISRAEL," Khalil has written more than 100 songs for Shaaban, most of them inspired by current events. When an assassin killed Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, Khalil wrote a song grieving his death. When the United States and Great Britain were on the eve of war with Iraq, Khalil wrote "Hitting Iraq." Sometimes, his songs feel more like public service announcements than political statements. As Egyptian restaurants removed chicken from their menus in response to fears of bird flu, Khalil wrote a song about the bird flu pandemic in which he urges farmers to "keep your sickly hens at home."

Khalil says he writes his political songs because Arabs "should wake up and open their eyes for the dangers coming to them." But, most fundamentally, Khalil's lyrics are animated by a sense that the Arab nation is under constant threat and is being humiliated. This pan-Arabism, once articulated by Nasser, may seem at odds with the rise of Islamism in the region today. But the view that Danish illustrators and American imperialists have humiliated the Islamic nation plays on these same fears. And, just as the supporters of Nasser felt he was speaking both to them and for them, so do the fans of Shaaban. Hany Hassan, a 27-year-old office assistant, says, "I like Shaaban, because he is honest, courageous, and spontaneous. In every single situation, I feel as if he is speaking on my behalf." A 43-year-old taxi driver says, "We are standing behind you, Shaaban, against all who insult our Prophet Mohammed."

Khalil bristles at the suggestion that lyrics like "I hate Israel" or "fire will be everywhere, burning your faces" are incitements to violence. And, while he concedes that "We're Out of Patience" contributed to the Arab world's boycott of Danish products, he refuses to believe that the sentiments of his music could have had anything to do with, say, torching a few embassies. "These songs calm people," he says. "They help people get their anger out instead of burning things." Khalil is focused on the future, anyway. His next project is a musical that will sum up his political philosophy. Its working title? "Life Is A Farce." ■

Rome Dispatch

Italian Sausage

BY TOBIAS JONES

FOR THE LAST five years, we lucky Italian correspondents have had it easy. We have trailed a prime minister so flamboyant, charismatic, and tactless that he guaranteed press conferences would become international news. You needed only to get your dictaphone close to Silvio Berlusconi's chin to be ensured a stream of insults, obscenities, philosophies, and fun. He told so many jokes and made so many gaffes that they have been collected in a book called *Berlusconate* ("Berlusconi-isms"). Rarely has covering politics been so amusing: Listen to bar banter in Italy, and there was always a story by or about the man they call *il Cavaliere*, "the Knight."

This month, he fought a general election against Romano Prodi. Prodi, a former economist, is a man nicknamed either "the Professor" or "Mortadella" (a rotund, processed ham). With his large glasses and lipless grin, Prodi looks like a kindly but dull parish priest. His uninspiring election posters promised—in deliberate contrast to Berlusconi—"seriousness in government."

This, no doubt, was a clash of styles, and, in Italy, style is everything. An election is less about politics than pageantry. Debate is often conducted through gesture and pose. During the last few days of campaigning, I was walking through a piazza in Rome and saw hundreds of people wearing T-shirts with the same message: *SONO UN COGLIONE*, they said, I'M A DUMBASS. Attractive girls kept offering me balloons or billboards so that I, too, could declare myself a *coglione*. I switched on the news that night and discovered that this was the day's top political story: Up and down the country, hundreds of thousands of people were cheerfully insulting themselves and insisting on being called dumbasses. Even by the bizarre standards of Italian politics, this was weird.

It all came about because Berlusconi had, the day before, explained why he thought he could still win: He didn't think, he said, there were that many "dumbasses around who could vote against their own interests." It was vintage Berlusconi—the swear-word showed he was still a man of the people, able to shoot from the hip. The mention of "interests" raised the specter of Prodi's tax increases and reminded voters of the key difference between the challenger and the incumbent: One was soberly talking about what was best for the country; the other was brazenly urging voters to do what Berlusconi does best—look after number one and no one else.

Tobias Jones is the author of THE DARK HEART OF ITALY. *His next book,* UTOPIAN DREAMS, *will be published in the United Kingdom in January 2007.*

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Berlusconi is often credited with bringing a consultant-driven, poll-tested American style of political campaigning to Europe. And now he can take credit for importing some other facets of modern American politics to Italy as well: a polarized electorate that bears an uncanny resemblance to America's intractable red state–blue state divide and bitterly contested vote tallies à la Florida in 2000. So the country enters a kind of political purgatory as Prodi takes his razor-thin electoral victory and attempts to assemble a coalition government. And, given the notorious instability of Italy's ruling coalitions, perhaps Prodi ought to savor the moment. If history is any guide, this interregnum may last longer than his reign.

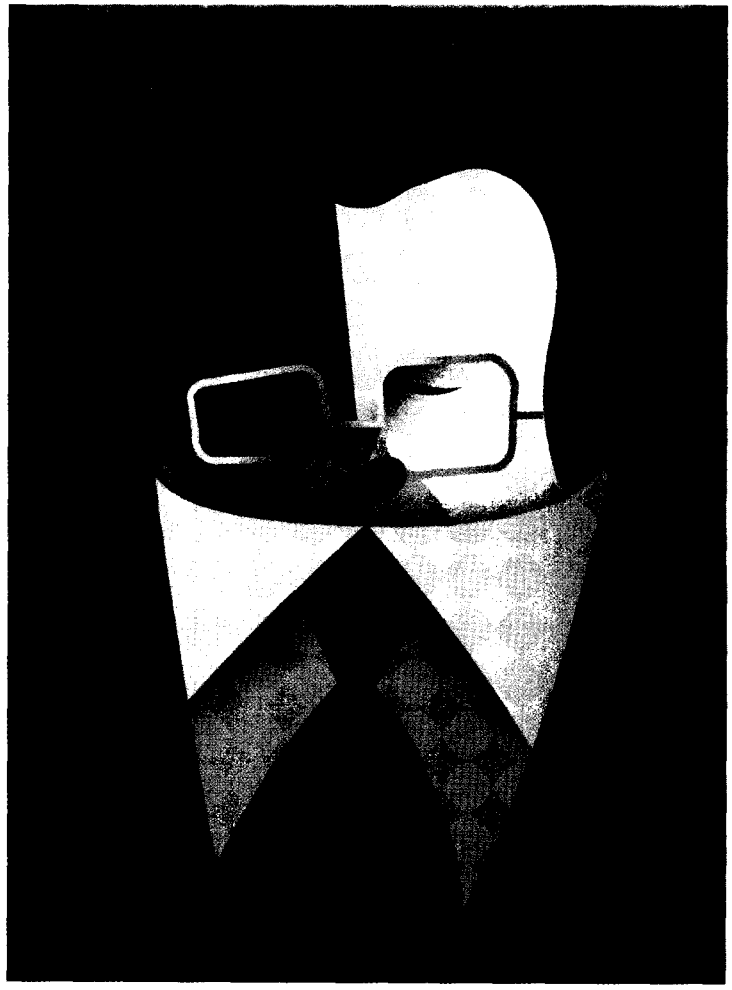
ITALIAN POLITICS HAS little to do with *politica* and almost everything to do with *partitica*: It's not about policies as such but old-fashioned party politicking. In the election, there were a jaw-dropping 174 parties competing, each with their own circular symbol officially registered for the pageant. Almost all debate prior to an election is about which party will affiliate with another; page upon page of newspaper commentary is dedicated to which parties will split or join together or disappear. The ballot is normally called a *scheda lenzuolo*, a "bedsheet ballot," because it's so large. Actually, this year it was a modest 25 inches long.

Characteristically, Berlusconi rewrote the electoral law months before the April poll and thus turned the result into a knife-edge. Prodi won the lower house election by less than one-tenth of 1 percent, and, in the upper house, the Senate, Prodi actually received 428,179 fewer votes than Berlusconi, not including overseas ballots (but, because of the constituency system, he has 158 seats against Berlusconi's 156). Berlusconi contested the result, ultimately appealing to the supreme court, which confirmed Prodi's victory. Now there is considerable doubt that Prodi will actually be able to govern.

Fluidity, rather than loyalty, is the enduring characteristic of Italian politics. Prodi won another election against Berlusconi back in 1996 and was subsequently ousted by defections in his own ranks. During that parliament (1996–2001), a staggering 158 politicians changed political party or moved with their party into a different coalition. To cling to power this time, Prodi will have to do the political equivalent of walking on water.

But he's not even in power yet. Prodi has to negotiate with all his allies and work out which "armchair" to give to whom. Then he has to present his government to the ceremonial head of state, the president of the Republic. The trouble is that the current president, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, is reluctant to swear in the new government, since his mandate ends on May 18. That means that the warring factions of the parliament's lower house (and 58 representatives of the regions) will have to decide on a new president before Prodi can begin to govern. It will take weeks, and Italy could find itself without a government until late May or even June.

All of which is further complicated by the fact that Italy is in the throes of a peaceful civil war. The country is split almost exactly down the middle (the results for the lower house were 49.8 percent against 49.7 percent). Those two halves are more than just political opposites: They are separated by history and culture and fashion. For the left, April 25 is the founding day of Italian democracy. It's a national holiday marking the anniversary of the 1945 liberation from fascism. But, as prime minister, Berlusconi pointedly refused to attend the celebrations. For him, the date is a dark reminder of the left-wing partisans who betrayed their own country. One of his political allies is, after all, Alessandra Mussolini. During Berlusconi's government, the judiciary was seen by the left as a last bulwark against illegality and corruption; for the right, the courts were merely theaters for communist-inspired witch hunts. Wearing Tod's shoes (made by Diego Della Valle, a fierce critic of Berlusconi) suggests you lean left; so does facial hair (Berlusconi famously demanded that his parliamentarians shave off beards) and drinking Illy coffee (coffee magnate Riccardo



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Illy is the left-wing president of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region). Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna are known as the red belt (red here meaning left, not right as in the United States); Veneto, Lombardy, and Sicily are more right-wing (in 2001, Berlusconi won 100 percent of the parliamentary seats in Sicily).

This tribalism is partly why the turnout at Italian elections is so admirably high (83.6 percent at this election). As one editorial said in *Il Messaggero* the day after the supreme court upheld the official result, "Italy has shown it has one great enemy: itself." When Berlusconi came to power for the second time, in May 2001, he was characterized by the left as a post-democratic dictator, a cross between Citizen Kane and Benito Mussolini. Now that the left is in power, Berlusconi has steadfastly refused to acknowledge defeat, thereby delegitimizing Prodi in the eyes of one half of the country.

THAT BERLUSCONI CAME within a whisker of winning tells you everything you need to know about Prodi. It's true, of course, that the new electoral law was a shamelessly bespoke piece of legislation; and it's true that Berlusconi has at his disposal a media empire that penalizes and discredits all opposition. But, given the circumstances, Prodi should have enjoyed a landslide. Economic growth in the last five years has been a slovenly 0.64 percent. The International Monetary Fund predicts a deficit of 4.3 percent of GDP in 2007, way above the 3 percent ceiling set by the European Union's Stability and Growth Pact. Berlusconi came to power riding on his reputation as a businessman with the Midas touch. He promised to make Italians rich. But, not only did he oversee an economic meltdown, he also—to the chagrin of the vast majority of Italians—pledged Italian support for Bush's Iraq fiasco.

But Berlusconi was running against a man who seemed to lack the killer instinct. The most common adjective used to describe Prodi is *pacione*, a pejorative way to say he's placid. He retains that air of a bumbling academic, a benevolent bore. His greatest strength—it's a strange kind of strength—is that people underestimate him. Like former British Prime Minister John Major (another man chosen as an antidote to a charismatic predecessor), Prodi has raced through the ranks almost because he goes unnoticed. Having been a professor at Bologna University, he became head of the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction (IRI), the enormous para-statal institute that was parceled off and privatized under Prodi's leadership. He became Italian prime minister for the first time in 1996, then president of the European Commission, and is now Italian prime minister once more. The CV suggests there must be some steel . . . somewhere.

The less flattering analysis of Prodi's ascent—the one repeatedly alleged by Berlusconi—is that he is merely the weak front man for darker forces. During his watch, the privatization of the IRI was dogged by allegations of profiteering, as state assets were mysteriously undersold. At the European Commission, corruption continued unchecked throughout Prodi's presidential tenure, even though he had come to power on the promise to root it out. Prodi's great asset is that, almost uniquely for an Italian politician, he is perceived as honest. Known for his Catholic faith, he's called a *bonaccione*, a goody-goody. The problem is that no one is quite sure at what point his perceived goodness becomes naïveté.

But the most intriguing moment of Prodi's career actually came when he tried to be a seer. In 1978, when former Prime Minister Aldo Moro was kidnapped by the Red Brigades, Prodi and other university colleagues held a séance to try to discover where he was being held—or where to find his corpse. Many felt that the séance was merely a charade by which university professors could tip off police without incriminating the far-left students or academics who may have given them the information. The spiritualist sitting came up with the name Gradoli, a medieval village near Viterbo. Police raided the place and found nothing. Only later was it realized that there was a Via Gradoli in Rome; and it was there, two weeks after the séance, that a recently abandoned hideout of the Red Brigades was actually discovered. Prodi has never given a satisfactory account, beyond the supernatural, of how he came by the information.

If Prodi actually has any superpowers, now would be the time to use them. The problems facing Italy are immense: Many of its traditional industries—particularly fashion and furniture—are those most vulnerable to cheaper Asian alternatives. The aging population exacerbates an already acute pension problem: The retirement age is 60, and Prodi will be under pressure from his allies to return it to 57. That in itself wouldn't be such a problem if the adult population were all fiscal contributors, but only 58 percent of those in the 15–64 age range are employed, the smallest percentage in Western Europe. To balance budgets, Prodi will almost certainly have to reintroduce the inheritance tax abolished by Berlusconi.

As for foreign policy, many in Prodi's left-wing alliance are knee-jerk anti-Americans. His coalition partners have frequently spoken of the desire to pull Italian troops out of Nasiriyah, in Iraq. Prodi himself knows the United States well. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard University and a scholar at the Stanford Research Institute; unlike Berlusconi, he speaks good English. The suspicion remains, however, that, as an ally, he'll be more like Spain's José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero than Great Britain's Tony Blair.

All of which might, however, prove to be academic. Berlusconi was the longest-serving postwar Italian prime minister—the first to serve his full mandate. Many suspect that, having returned to proportional representation, Italy will once again witness revolving-door governments in which prime ministers breeze in and out of power like guests in a hotel lobby. Prodi, they say, will be gone before the year is out. But the deep divisions in the Italian electorate and the massive structural problems facing its economy—those are likely to prove more enduring fixtures of Italian life. ■

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Fixing the immigration debate.

Citizen Pain

BY PETER SKERRY AND DEVIN FERNANDES

"IF I WERE in their shoes, I'd be doing the same thing—coming across that border and trying to better things for myself and my family." These are the words volunteered—almost verbatim, sooner or later—by just about every Border Patrol agent we have interviewed over the past decade. It's not a sentiment you would hear from other law enforcement officers: Just imagine your neighborhood cop saying, "If I were in that guy's situation, I'd be dealing drugs, too." Border Patrol agents detain illegals wherever and whenever they find them, but an awareness of the moral ambiguity of the "crime" they are fighting pervades their efforts.

Such nuance is at odds with the sharp categories drawn in the current immigration debate. To those leading the charge to seal our borders, illegal immigrants are lawbreakers who should be prosecuted and sent home. These restrictionists see no ambiguity in the situation, even though our economy depends upon the labor of illegals, and the millions of Americans who hire them are complicit in their offense. Advocates for the undocumented are often equally outraged, because they consider illegals victims who are exploited by employers and pushed to the margins of society. They hope to help undocumented immigrants by somehow legalizing them.

What virtually all parties to this debate share is the notion that illegal immigrants are denizens of some subterranean world. From *The New York Times* to George W. Bush, defenders of immigrants depict illegals surviving in the "shadows." So do border vigilantes like the Minutemen, who fear that those shadows conceal terrorists and malingerers sponging off social programs. Even savvy hardliners like Representative James Sensenbrenner, the sponsor of legislation criminalizing illegal aliens as well as those who aid them, rely on the same imagery. "Unless we get a handle on illegal immigration," Sensenbrenner told *Fox News*, "we're going to turn illegal immigrants who can't get papers or Social Security cards into a permanent underclass."

Of course, as recent protests across the nation demonstrate, illegals are hardly reluctant to come out into the daylight. Yet the universally held—but virtually unquestioned—assumption is that illegal immigrants make up a discrete and problematic group, whereas legal immigrants are a benign or even beneficial presence. But this sharp dichotomy is fundamentally misleading. Were illegals granted amnesty, they would undeniably be relieved of a burden. But the benefits for both them and the Americans currently bothered by their presence would be far less significant than widely assumed. At the same time, the measures intended to give political ballast to amnesty—beefed-up border enforcement and increased visas for legal entry—would either inadequately address or actually exacerbate public anxieties about immigration. That's because the problems facing us do not stem exclusively from illegal immigration, but from immigration itself.

THE DEBATE OVER immigration has not always been starkly couched in terms of legal versus illegal. Today's controversy has its origins in the 1980 Mariel boatlift, when Fidel Castro created a crisis for the hapless Carter administration by allowing several thousand criminals and other undesirables to flee Cuba for the Florida coast. For many Americans, "refugee" began to take on a less positive connotation. Meanwhile, Mexicans without documentation streamed freely across our Southern border in increasing numbers. In 1986, Congress finally passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act, which tried to end the influx by penalizing employers who hired illegals and, in one stroke, granted amnesty to millions already here.

The turning point in the immigration debate was Proposition 187, an initiative approved in 1994 by three-fifths of California voters (including about one-fourth of Latinos). This was a draconian measure that—had the courts let it stand—would have denied most public services, such as education and health care, to undocumented immigrants. Before Proposition 187, immigrant advocates had benefited from a deep-seated aversion on the part of virtually all political elites to acknowledging that any problems stemmed from immigration—because doing so was to risk being tarred as racist. That political environment afforded advocates considerable space to aggressively challenge the very category "illegal immigrant" and to insist on more neutral or positive terms, such as "undocumented worker."

It took a politician as shrewd, tough, and desperate as California Governor Pete Wilson to seize on Proposition 187. With it, Wilson salvaged his doomed reelection bid, flooding the airwaves with a controversial ad showing shadowy figures scampering across the Mexican border and thereby putting illegal immigration on the state and national agenda.

The price Republicans paid for Wilson's boldness is now political legend. Proposition 187 spurred such a backlash against the GOP that, in California, it has been reduced to minority party status—Arnold Schwarzenegger's election notwithstanding. Yet Proposition 187 also chastened immigrant advocates, who abandoned their efforts to blur the line between legal and illegal and came to accept as a fallback position the newly emergent consensus that legal im-

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migration was a blessing, illegal immigration a problem. For their part, immigration restrictionists learned to reduce their array of objections to immigration generally to the problem of illegals specifically—a tactic that also enabled them to avoid the charge of racism. The legal-illegal dichotomy thus became a relatively safe framework within which to debate a complicated and volatile issue—and it has stayed that way until today.

CONCERNS ABOUT ILLEGAL immigration are hardly unfounded. The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that there are as many as twelve million "unauthorized migrants" in the United States, with 850,000 new ones arriving each year—not only in California, but also in states like North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. What was once a regional concern has increasingly become a national one. Certain aspects of this influx are undeniably troubling from a policy standpoint. For example, 59 percent of adult illegals lack health insurance, compared with 25 percent of adult legal immigrants and 14 percent of natives.

Nevertheless, the legal-illegal dichotomy makes more political sense for harried officials than policy sense for the rest of us. Indeed, the public's concerns about immigration are both broader and deeper than the debate acknowledges. When Americans denounce illegal immigrants, they complain about lost jobs, overcrowded schools and emergency rooms, and noisy, dirty neighborhoods where nobody speaks English. In an April Fox News poll, two-thirds of respondents were concerned that illegal immigrants "take jobs away from U.S. citizens," while 87 percent worried that illegals "overburden government programs and services." In a January *Time* survey, 63 percent expressed concern that illegals "take jobs away from Americans," and 60 percent feared that "there are already too many people in the United States."

Yet, whatever their specific merits, not one of these complaints pertains uniquely to illegal immigrants. If Congress were to grant a general amnesty or augment legal immigration tomorrow, the same concerns would be voiced by Americans. This suggests that something else is bothering the public: the transience and disorder that inevitably accompany mass migration.

Americans want to believe that immigrants come here to stay. It is part of the national mythology that the United States is a beacon, attracting foreigners who long to become part of our noble experiment. That's what President Bush is getting at when he says, "It says something about our country that people around the world are willing to leave their homes and leave their families and risk everything to come to America."

But this is, at best, a half-truth that ignores the fact that immigrants do not typically arrive here intending to settle down. As MIT economist Michael Piore has noted, even a century ago, approximately one-third of those arriving from Southern and Eastern Europe actually returned to their native countries. Migrants today, especially those who do not need to cross an ocean, move between the United States and their homeland with greater frequency. Most come here to work hard, save money, and then go home and invest their savings in a tractor, some land, or a house. Princeton sociologist Douglas Massey and his colleagues at the Mexican Migration Project conclude, "Left to their own devices, most Mexican immigrants would work in the United States only sporadically and for limited periods of time." Massey emphasizes that even those with legal documents don't necessarily intend to stay.

University of California–Irvine anthropologist Leo Chavez reports that such sojourners are "target earners," focused singlemindedly on maximizing earnings and minimizing expenditures. So they put up with overcrowded living quarters, sharing beds, and sleeping in shifts. And they work more than one job, often enduring substandard or dangerous working conditions. Many employers exploit such workers. But the well-kept secret about immigrants is that they are also willing to exploit themselves.

Such hard work and determination are admirable. But the narrow, short-term goals of target earners contribute directly to the instability

Protesters make a misleading distinction.

JACK KURTZ/ZUMA PRESS/NEWSCOM

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of immigrant neighborhoods. Even when such immigrants bring their families, this instability persists—just ask any school administrator in California about empty classrooms when Mexican families go home for prolonged visits, especially at holidays. By the same token, sojourners focused on returning home tend not to make good neighbors. Often, they are oblivious to others' expectations about noise, litter, or attendance at PTA meetings. As a police lieutenant in Santa Ana, a Southern California city with a predominantly Latino population, once put it to one of us: "How do you do community policing when there is no community?"

For many Americans, this transience—and its accompanying disorder—is personified by day laborers loitering near a Home Depot, waiting for a few hours' work. To some, these men are exemplars of ambition and an admirable work ethic. But, to many, they are annoying, even threatening—unkempt men leering at passing women, running out into traffic to negotiate with potential employers, drinking and urinating in public, and perhaps dealing drugs.

Not all such complaints should be taken at face value. But the National Day Labor Study at UCLA indicates that a majority of day laborers are unattached men—a classically problematic population. In extremis, such individuals are fodder for civil disturbances that have broken out among immigrants in cities like Miami, Washington, New York, and, of course, Los Angeles. Noting that 51 percent of those arrested during the 1992 Los Angeles riots were Latinos, RAND demographers Peter Morrison and Ira Lowry point to "the availability of a large pool of idle young men who had little stake in civil order" as one reason why, in multiethnic states like California, "we ought to expect more riots."

What is bothering Americans most about immigration, legal or illegal, is that it frays—and threatens to rip—the social fabric; it makes them feel that things are out of control. To be sure, such sentiments are often inchoate and are seldom expressed clearly—in no small measure because ordinary Americans don't get much help. As with old debates over crime, liberal elites condescendingly dismiss such concerns as racist or foolishly reduce them to economic fears. Even sympathetic conservatives are not very responsive, in great part because they, too, have bought into the prevailing legal-illegal dichotomy. Without such elite support, mass discontent remains submerged until it erupts in an angry and inarticulate populist outburst, which of course sends the politicians scurrying for the safety of the entrenched legal-illegal framework.

YET, IF POLITICIANS were to step outside that framework, it would be possible to address the anxieties of many Americans. After all, over time the opportunistic strategies of immigrants do change. Whatever their original intentions, many develop social ties on this side of the border. They start families, and their children born here are American citizens. They buy houses. A Pew Hispanic Center survey indicates that hundreds of thousands of illegals are homeowners. They join unions. The recent pro-immigrant demonstrations were supported by several unions whose ranks include significant numbers of illegal workers. As UCLA sociologist Ruth Milkman has observed, undocumented Latinos "have been at the core of the L.A. labor movement's revival."

These changes point to America's dynamism and openness and suggest that the best way of coping with immigration would be to encourage newcomers to settle down. Yet adjusting the formal legal status of immigrants won't go very far toward meeting this goal. Indeed, the various guest-worker proposals now being debated would actually institutionalize immigrant transience by facilitating constant movement back and forth across the border. Instead, we must address the *behavior* of immigrants and encourage them to become responsible members of our political community—whether by learning English, observing local noise and occupancy ordinances, or ensuring their children's regular attendance at school. At the same time, we should avoid sending confusing signals to immigrants—with permissive policies on dual citizenship, for example.

One promising model comes from a church-based community development program in southwest Chicago's heavily Latino parishes. The Resurrection Project provides good-quality rental and owner-occupied housing at reasonable prices to parishioners prepared to agree to specific community obligations. These include attending courses on personal finance and home maintenance as well as pledging zero tolerance for vandalism and abuse of property. More comprehensive is the Golden State Residency Program, an array of proposals put forward by the state of California's bipartisan Little Hoover Commission. These would offer access to driver's licenses, in-state tuition, health care, job training, and housing to immigrants who stay out of the criminal justice system, pay taxes, learn English, make sure their children attend school regularly, participate in local civic efforts, and demonstrate a willingness to become citizens.

Such programs would undoubtedly benefit illegal as well as legal immigrants. But at least they would foster a more formal and enduring bond than the precarious existing relationship between immigrants who are unsure they want to be here and Americans who are unhappy that they are. But, to address the concerns of so many Americans, these efforts would need to be backed up with meaningful immigration enforcement—both at the border and in the interior, especially on employers hiring illegal immigrants.

Changing behavior and reknitting the social fabric is a much more difficult project than revising formal rules. The latter is what Congress is now contemplating—either to provide relief to illegal immigrants or to penalize, even criminalize, them. It would be foolish and callous to maintain that such legislative initiatives won't affect many immigrants. Yet it would be equally foolish to believe that the proposals being debated will have much impact on the problems confronting us. No matter what this Congress does, the practical wisdom of those empathetic Border Patrol agents will go unheeded. So will the concerns of many Americans. ■

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George Allen's race problem.

Pin Prick

BY RYAN LIZZA

SENATOR GEORGE ALLEN is the only person in Virginia who wears cowboy boots. It's a warm and bright spring day in the swampy southeastern Virginia town of Wakefield, site of the annual Virginia political fest known as Shad Planking. Once a whites-only event where state Democrats picked their nominees, Shad Planking is now a multiracial affair where candidates from both parties come to show off their regular-guy bona fides and trade lighthearted barbs. Beer flows freely. Knots of tailgaters gossip about state politics. In a clearing amid tall pines, shad is cooked on long wooden boards. Though the two Democrats fighting for a shot to challenge Allen this year in his Senate reelection campaign both show up for the event, Allen clearly owns the crowd, as the sea of royal blue ALLEN T-shirts and baseball caps makes clear. The senator has emerged as the principal conservative alternative to John McCain in the early jockeying among 2008 Republican presidential candidates, and today's event is a reminder of what conservatives love about him.

But nobody else wears cowboy boots. The guy passing out the stickers that say I SUPPORT CONFEDERATE HISTORY MONTH is in sneakers. The libertarian who asks me to ask Allen about industrial hemp and abolition of the IRS is in very sensible shoes. The pink and pudgy sports-radio host drawling friendly questions at Allen is in loafers. A guy walks up to Allen and sticks a piece of paper in his hand. "Some people are handing out these, saying you aren't pro-gun enough," he tells the senator, a little menacingly. I look down at his feet. High-tops.

There is a guy in a bolo tie. This excites Allen, who is quoted in the newspaper the next day approvingly advising bolo guy, "If you're going to wear a tie, that's the one to wear." Allen has lots of finely honed opinions about red-state cultural aesthetics, and he is always eager to share them. He talks with the radio host about the merits of Virginia's different country music stations. Allen is dismayed about the modern country played on one AM station. "I like the *real* country music," he says.

It's credible enthusiasm given that, this afternoon, Allen resembles a froufrou version of Toby Keith. He is wearing a blue button-down shirt and brown pants accented with a fat brass belt buckle that says VIRGINIA in stylized, countrified letters. And, of course, he's wearing the cowboy boots. They are black, broken in, and vaguely reptilian. From his back pocket, he removes a tin of Copenhagen—"the brand of choice for adult consumers who identify with its rugged, individual and uncompromising image," according to the company—and taps a fat wad of the tobacco between his lip and gum using an impressive one-handed maneuver. As the scrum breaks up, Allen turns away and spits a long brown streak of saliva into the dirt, just missing one of his constituents, a carefully put-together, blonde, ponytailed woman approaching the senator for an autograph. She stops in her tracks and stares with disgust at the bubbly tobacco juice that almost landed on her feet. Without missing a beat, Allen's communications director, John Reid, reassures her: "That's just authenticity!"

It's a word they use a lot it the Allen world—"authenticity." His aides and the growing ranks of conservative backers hungry for someone to take out McCain emphasize Allen's down-home credentials and cowboy-boot charisma far more than his voting record. A glowing *National Review* cover story, to take one recent example, trumpeted Allen's preternatural fluency in the sports metaphor–laden language of American masculinity. This gift for communicating in the vernacular of John Madden doesn't just distinguish him; it makes him the ideal vehicle for a particular brand of Republican campaign strategy. As the GOP has grown increasingly adept at turning elections into contests about style and character rather than issues and ideas, some Republicans have become obsessed with finding candidates who can project the cultural identity of a red-state everyman. It sometimes seems that pro-NASCAR has replaced pro-life as the party's litmus test.

While Allen's shit-kickin' image may be the subject of certain Republican consultant fantasies, it may not be ideal in the current political climate. A certain someone has, after all, used that shtick before, effectively bludgeoning his Democratic opponents with his Texas brand of cultural populism. But, by now, that folksy act looks a little spent. And, although Allen is undoubtedly the hot new thing within the Beltway's conservative establishment, some denizens of K Street and right-wing newsrooms have begun doubting whether he represents their best hope to snuff out the burgeoning campaign of their enemy, McCain. "If my choice is, 'Who do I want to go out with to a fun dinner to drink our brains out,' " says one of the party's top fund-raisers who has met with Allen many times, "there's no question, it'd be Allen. He's a guy's guy, but he didn't blow me away in terms of substance."

Fortunately for Allen, he has a protean ability to shift political personas to adapt to the prevailing political fashions. In the 1980s, he was a Reagan revolutionary. As governor of Virginia at the height of the Gingrich insurgency, he promoted his own version of the Contract with America throughout his state. As Virginia modernized, with high-tech eclips-

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ing the tobacco economy, he remade himself as a traveling-salesman governor, luring new companies to the state.

Even in these early days of his budding presidential campaign, he has slipped out of the self-styled image of Bush's most loyal foot soldier. He now says the president is welcome to campaign for him but expresses no enthusiasm for the idea. He tells reporters he is more like Ronald Reagan than George W. Bush. But it's not Bush from whom Allen ultimately needs to distance himself. There is a graveyard of old Allen personas—unpresidential personas, downright ugly ones—that could threaten his political ascendance. Even his authentic self—or, rather, the man described by his own family—might prove just as great a liability. His identity crisis has created the most intriguing duel of 2008: Before he runs for president, George Allen has to run against himself.

IT'S MID-APRIL, and the private plane carrying Allen and his entourage has just landed at the Stafford Regional Airport. After months of out-of-state fund-raising and sojourns into Iowa and New Hampshire, the senator is suddenly taking care of business back home with a three-day, eleven-city reelection announcement tour. Jim Webb, Reagan's Navy secretary, is running in the Democratic primary, Bush's job approval rating in the state is in the 30s, and there is some cautious talk about Virginia, once a presumed gimme for Allen, becoming a competitive race.

After all the heady presidential planning—the hiring of big-name consultants like Mary Matalin, Ed Gillespie, and Dick Wadhams and the first-place finish in fund-raising last quarter—nothing could bring Allen down to earth faster than the Stafford event. There are less than three dozen people here, including numerous Allen aides. The wind knocks over the American and Virginia flags that form Allen's backdrop. And then there is Craig Ennis, who says he's an independent candidate here to debate Allen. His T-shirt says U.S. SPECIAL FORCES: MOTIVATED, DEDICATED, LETHAL. He positions himself in front of the platform on which Allen and his wife, Susan, stand and holds a homemade sign: WHY DO YOU HIDE FROM ME?

Allen delivers a stump speech that rests heavily on his record as governor from 1994 to 1998 and skips rapidly over the details of his five years in the Senate. The soft-peddling of his legislative record may have struck the audience as a strange tack for an incumbent. But it has its own compelling political logic. Allen knows that senators have a dismal record as presidential candidates. There is, however, an equally compelling reason why Allen might not want to revisit his years in Richmond.

In the early '90s, Allen exuded the revolutionary spirit of the Republican insurgency. His 1994 inaugural address as governor promised to "fight the beast of tyranny and oppression that our federal government has become." That year, he also endorsed Oliver North for the Senate even as Virginia Senator John Warner and others in the party establishment shunned the convicted felon. At North's nominating convention, Allen proposed a somewhat overwrought approach for beating Democrats: "My friends—and I say this figuratively—let's enjoy knocking their soft teeth down their whining throats."

But, while Allen may have genuflected in the direction of Gingrich, he also showed a touch of Strom Thurmond. Campaigning for governor in 1993, he admitted to prominently displaying a Confederate flag in his living room. He said it was part of a flag collection—and had been removed at the start of his gubernatorial bid. When it was learned that he kept a noose hanging on a ficus tree in his law office, he said it was part of a Western memorabilia collection. These explanations may be sincere. But, as a chief executive, he also compiled a controversial record on race. In 1994, he said he would accept an honorary membership at a Richmond social club with a well-known history of discrimination—an invitation that the three previous governors had refused. After an outcry, Allen rejected the offer. He replaced the only black member of the University of Virginia (UVA) Board of Visitors with a white one. He issued a proclamation drafted by the Sons of Confederate Veterans declaring April Confederate History and Heritage Month. The text celebrated Dixie's "four-year struggle for independence and sovereign rights." There was no mention of slavery. After some of the early flaps, a headline in *The Washington Post* read, "GOVERNOR SEEN LEADING VA. BACK IN TIME."

Allen has described those early years as a learning experience. Indeed, he sanded off the rough edges and began molding himself to the Bush era, when conservatives began abandoning the crudeness of their old Southern strategy. During the second half of his gubernatorial term, Allen began positioning himself as the next cool thing in Republican politics, a governor more interested in results than partisanship. Indeed, at the Stafford Airport stump speech, there are no confederate flags or coded racial appeals. Instead, Allen talks about energy independence and the competitive challenge from rising economies like China's and India's. If it weren't for some of the rhetoric about "tax commissars," one might mistake Allen's stump speech for a Tom Friedman column.

Even if the moderate turn leads voters to remember the governor of fiscal responsibility rather than the Confederate history booster, there's still a problem. Before there was a Governor Allen, there was a state legislator Allen. Allen became active in Virginia politics in the mid-'70s, when state Republicans were first learning how to assemble a new political coalition by wooing white Democrats with appeals to states' rights and respect for Dixie heritage.

Allen was a quick study. In his first race in 1979—according to Larry Sabato, a UVA professor and college classmate of Allen's—he ran a radio ad decrying a congressional redistricting plan whose main purpose was to elect Virginia's first post-Reconstruction black congressman. Allen lost that race but was back in 1982 and won the seat by 25 votes. He spent the next nine years in Richmond, where his pet issues, judging by the bills he personally sponsored, were crime and welfare. But he also found himself repeatedly voting in the minority on a series of racial issues that he seems embarrassed

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by today. In 1984, he was one of 27 House members to vote against a state holiday commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. *The Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported, "Allen said the state shouldn't honor a non-Virginian with his own holiday." He was also bothered by the fact that the proposed holiday would fall on the day set aside in Virginia to honor Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. That same year, he did feel the urge to honor one of Virginia's own. He co-sponsored a resolution expressing "regret and sorrow upon the loss" of William Munford Tuck, a politician who opposed every piece of civil rights legislation while in Congress during the 1950s and 1960s and promised "massive resistance" to the Supreme Court's 1954 decision banning segregation.

None of this means Allen is a racist, of course. He is certainly not the same guy today that he was in the '80s. But his interest in Southern heritage and his fetish for country culture goes back even further. And what's truly improbable is how someone with his upbringing ever acquired such backwoods tastes.

GEORGE ALLEN IS the oldest child of legendary football coach George Herbert Allen, and, when his father was on the road, young George often acted as a surrogate dad to his siblings. According to his sister Jennifer, he was particularly strict about bedtimes. One night, his brother Bruce stayed up past his bedtime. George threw him through a sliding glass door. For the same offense, on a different occasion, George tackled his brother Gregory and broke his collarbone. When Jennifer broke her bedtime curfew, George dragged her upstairs by her hair.

George tormented Jennifer enough that, when she grew up, she wrote a memoir of what it was like living in the Allen family. In one sense, the book, *Fifth Quarter*, from which these details are culled, is unprecedented. No modern presidential candidate has ever had such a harsh and personal account of his life delivered to the public by a close family member. The book paints Allen as a cartoonishly sadistic older brother who holds Jennifer by her feet over Niagara Falls on a family trip (instilling in her a lifelong fear of heights) and slams a pool cue into her new boyfriend's head. "George hoped someday to become a dentist," she writes. "George said he saw dentistry as a perfect profession—getting paid to make people suffer."

Whuppin' his siblings might have been a natural prelude to Confederate sympathies and noose-collecting if Allen had grown up in, say, a shack in Alabama. But what is most puzzling about Allen's interest in the old Confederacy is that he didn't grow up in the South. Like a military brat, Allen hopscotched around the country on a route set by his father's coaching career. The son was born in Whittier, California, in 1952 (Whittier College Poets), moved to the suburbs of Chicago for eight years (the Bears), and arrived in Southern California as a teenager (the Rams). In Palos Verdes, an exclusive cliffside community, he lived in a palatial home with sweeping views of downtown Los Angeles and the Santa Monica basin. It had handmade Italian tiles and staircases that his eccentric mother, Etty, designed to match those in the Louvre. "It looks like a French château," says Linda Hurt Germany, a high school classmate.

Even the elder George Allen wasn't Southern—he grew up in the Midwest—but the oddest part of the myth of George Allen's Dixie rusticity is his mother. Rather than a Southern belle, Etty was, in fact, French, and, as such, she was a deliciously indiscreet cultural libertine. She would do housework in her bra and panties. She wore muumuus and wraparound sunglasses and once won a belly button contest. According to Jennifer, "Mom prided herself for being un-American. ... She was ashamed that she had given up her French citizenship to become a citizen of a country she deemed infantile." When her husband later moved the family to Virginia, Etty despised living in the state. She was also anti-Washington before her son ever was, albeit in a slightly more continental fashion. "Washingtonians think their town resembles Paris," she once scoffed. "If Paris passed gas, you'd have Washington."

Allen is now so associated with football—he played at Palos Verdes High School and at UVA, speaks in famously complicated football metaphors, and frequently tosses around the pigskin at campaign events—that he is most often described in relation to his father. But his siblings have said he actually takes after mom. Like Etty, George saw himself as disconnected from the culture in which he lived. He hated California and, while there, became obsessed with the supposed authenticity of rural life—or at least what he imagined it to be from episodes of "Hee Haw," his favorite TV show, or family vacations in Mexico, where he rode horses. Perhaps because of his peripatetic childhood, the South's deeply rooted culture attracted him. Or perhaps it was a romance with the masculinity and violence of that culture; his father, who was not one to spare the rod, once broke his son Gregory's nose in a fight. Whatever it was, Allen got his first pair of those now-iconic cowboy boots from one of his father's players on the Rams who received them as a promotional freebie. He also learned to dip from his dad's players. At school, he started to wear an Australian bush hat, complete with a dangling chin strap and the left brim snapped up. He wore the hat for a yearbook photo of the falconry club. His favorite record was Johnny Cash's *At Folsom Prison*. Writing of her brother's love for the "big, slow-witted Junior" on "Hee Haw," Jennifer reports, "[t]here was also something mildly country-thuggish about Junior that I think George felt akin to."

In high school, Allen's "Hee Haw" persona made him a polarizing figure. "He rode a little red Mustang around with a Confederate flag plate on the front," says Patrick Campbell, an old classmate, who now works for the Public Works Department in Manhattan Beach, California. "I mean, it was absurd-looking in our neighborhood." Hurt Germany, who now lives in Paso Robles, California, explodes with anger at the mention of Allen's name. "The guy is horrible," she complains. "He drove around with a Confederate flag on his Mus-

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tang. I can't believe he's going to run for president." Another classmate, who asks that I not use her name, also remembers Allen's obsession with Dixie: "My impression is that he was a rebel. He plastered the school with Confederate flags."

Politically, Allen's years in Palos Verdes were dominated by the lingering racial tensions from the riots in nearby Watts in 1965—when that neighborhood was practically burned to the ground—and the nationwide riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, which left other parts of Southern California in flames. It is with that context in mind that four former classmates and one former administrator at Allen's high school described to me an event for which Allen is most remembered—and the first glimpse that the château-raised Californian might grow up to become a defender of the South's heritage.

It was the night before a major basketball game with Morningside High. The mostly black inner-city school adjacent to Watts was coming to the almost entirely white Palos Verdes High to play. When students arrived at school on game day, they found graffiti spray-painted on the school library and other places. All five people who described the incident say the graffiti was racially tinged and meant to look like the handiwork of the black Morningside students. But it was actually put there by Allen and some of his friends. "It was something like DIE WHITEY," says Campbell. The school administrator, who says he is a Republican and would "seriously consider" voting for Allen for president, says the graffiti said, "BURN, BABY, BURN," a reference to the race riots.

Soon after, Allen finally got the chance to become a Southerner. In 1971, his dad was hired to coach the Redskins, and the Allens relocated to Virginia. Allen transferred from UCLA, where he spent his first year of college, to UVA. The old "Hee Haw" fan was like a pig in slop. Even at Virginia's own state school, Allen stood out for his showy brand of good ol' boyness. Under the headline "ALLEN AND COUNTRY LIVING," a 1973 profile in the school paper noted his penchant for country music had earned him the campus nickname of "Neck." He drove a pickup truck (paid for by the Redskins). He wore cowboy boots. He supported Richard Nixon and the war in Vietnam. He once shot a squirrel on campus, skinned it, ate it, and hung its pelt on his wall. "He was trying to be more Virginian than the average Virginian," says Sabato.

After graduating, Allen stuck around UVA for three years of law school. Professors remember him as the guy in the back row of class spitting tobacco into a cup. "He was Mr. Cool," says a UVA law professor who taught him. "But, if you would have said he would go on to be governor, senator, and then run for president, people would have said that was the least probable thing that would ever happen."

I AM STANDING in front of George Allen, but he doesn't seem to notice me. He's seated behind a tank-sized wooden desk in his Senate office, buried in paperwork. In front of him is a white spit cup, the outside of it stained a little brown by some errant saliva. Though I've been announced and walked the length of his football field of an office to greet him, he is distracted. I stand for an awkward moment before he finally bounds out of his chair, opening up his six-foot-four frame—perhaps five with cowboy-boot heels—and welcomes me with a hearty shake and a tobacco-specked smile.

His office might be called classically senatorial. In the reception area, there are three walls of power photos, political cartoons, and action shots of Allen. There's Allen driving a race car. Allen on a horse. Allen throwing a football. A cover story from *Richmond* magazine features his wife: "WHAT VIPS DRIVE—FIRST LADY SUSAN ALLEN ❤ HER 4WD."

Allen and I talk a little about being a senator versus a governor. He seems determined to keep his outsider cred in hopes of surviving the anti-incumbent wave building in Virginia. He casts his lot in with the angry voters. "I'm aggravated," he says. "I get frustrated by the slow pace of the Senate, as are most Virginians and most Americans. I like action. I like to see things get done."

But, mostly, Allen and I talk about race. It's a subject that's much on his mind these days, as he tries to make amends for his old pro-Dixie stances. He's trying to get more money for historically black colleges. And he has spent the last few years in what might be called civil rights boot camp. In 2003, he traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, on a "civil rights pilgrimage." "I wish I had [gone] sooner," he says. "I was listening to the old civil rights movement, the strategies, the foundations, the tactics, and—in watching all of it, and in my point of view—I don't see how you can stand being knocked off a stool at a lunch counter and just take it. My reaction is, 'I don't see how you can take it.' And they say, 'You understand, it's all peaceful and nonviolent.' And I say, 'I just don't understand this.' " Allen bonded at the event with a former Black Panther who agreed with his take on nonviolence. "Of course, he played linebacker, I find out, and we became wonderful friends for the rest of the pilgrimage." Allen says that, in a few days, he will travel to Farmville, Virginia, for another reconciliation pilgrimage—this one with Representative John Lewis, the heroic civil rights activist.

Allen also tells me about the anti-lynching resolution he sponsored and helped pass in 2005, launching into a soliloquy about what he's learned in recent years about genocide. Back when he was governor, a series of black churches in Virginia were burned down, and Allen attended a meeting with President Clinton and Vice President Gore on the matter. "I went to the Holocaust Museum, which is the best museum in this country," he says. "And you recognize that people knew what was going on." He thought about that experience when he decided to champion the anti-lynching apology.

Allen knows the trouble spots in his record and has ready answers. We talk about his sister's book ("It's the perspective of the youngest child, who is a girl"), about the noose ("It had nothing to do with anything other than the Western motif in my office"), and about the Confederate

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flag once hanging in his living room ("I have a flag collection"). As for his mischievous attempt to scare his classmates into believing that his school was going to be burned to the ground, Allen, who, as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, co-sponsored a resolution calling for a crackdown on school vandalism, denies the incident had anything to do with race. "It was something like EAT CRAP or something like that," says Allen, who was suspended for the incident. "YOUR SCHOOL SUCKS, and so forth. It wasn't racial. Bad enough what I did—didn't have that to it. The purpose was to get your team riled up against a rival."

We move away from race and onto energy independence. But there was one nagging question that, even as I sat there listening to Allen go on about soy diesel fuel and lithium ion batteries, I still wasn't sure I would ask. Two days earlier, while preparing for this interview, I had Allen's high school yearbook open in front of me. I kept thinking about the creepy game day prank and the classmates who described the rebel flag on the car and the e-mail from Patrick Campbell: "Some of my classmates and I became rather disturbed a few years ago when we learned that George was rising in the political scene," he had written me. "Mr. Allen is known as a racist in our Southern California society which is why we feel he relocated to an environment which was more supportive of his view points." Maybe I had just stepped into the middle of a revenge-of-the-nerds type spat; Allen was, after all, the quarterback of the football team, and Campbell was a biology lab assistant. And did anything that happened in high school really matter today?

George Allen, the Stonewall Jackson of Palos Verdes High. (The photo detail was enhanced for clarity.)

I stared closely at Allen's smirk in his photo, weighing whether his old classmates were just out to destroy him. And then I noticed something on his collar. It's hard to make out, but then it becomes obvious. Seventeen-year-old George Allen is wearing a Confederate flag pin.

Still, I wasn't sure I'd ask him about it. And then he says something that changes my mind. As a child, Allen tells me, before he even moved to California, he learned about the painful history of the South when his dad would take the kids on long drives from Chicago to New Orleans and other Southern cities for football bowl games. There was one searing memory from those trips he shares with me. "I remember," Allen says, "driving through—somehow, my father was on some back road in Mississippi one time—and we had Illinois license plates. And it was a time when some of the freedom riders had been killed, and somehow we're on this road. And you see a cross burning way off in the fields. I was young at the time. I just remember the sense of urgency as we were driving through the night, a carload of people with Illinois license plates—that this is not necessarily a safe place to be."

Now the pin seemed even worse. Why would a young man with such a sensitive understanding of Southern racial conflict and no Southern heritage wear a Confederate flag in his formal yearbook photo?

I finally ask him if he remembers the pin, explaining that another of his classmates had the same one in his photo, a guy named Deke. "No," Allen says with a laugh. "Where is this picture?" He leans forward over his desk and tightens his lip around the plug of Copenhagen in his mouth. "Hmmm." He pauses. He speaks slowly, apparently searching his memory. "Well, it's no doubt I was rebellious," he says, "a rebellious kid. I don't know. Unless we were doing something for the fun of it. Deke was from Texas. He was a good friend. Let me think." He stretches back in the chair, his boots sticking out from underneath his desk. "Yeah, yeah, that's interesting. I'll have to find it myself." Another pause. "I don't know. We would probably do things to upset people from time to time."

He stammers some more, says he saw Deke in an airport recently. "I don't know, I don't know," he continues. "It could be some sort of prank, or one of our rebellious—we would do different things. But I remember we liked Texas."

The next day, at Allen's request, I send him a copy of the yearbook photo. A few hours later, his office confirms that the pin was indeed a Confederate flag. In an e-mail sent through an aide, Allen says, "When I was in high school in California, I generally bucked authority and the rebel flag was just a way to express that attitude." And then he's off. He explains that he "grew up in a football family where life was integrated sooner than most of the rest of the country." He reminds me of his parole, education, and economic achievements as governor. He also tells me about the money he's trying to secure for minority institutions and an upcoming speaking gig at St. Paul's College, a historically black school in Virginia. "Life is a learning experience," he muses. In fact, he says, he's continuing his education this very weekend at the civil rights pilgrimage. But, in the Allen versus Allen primary, every time the new Allen has the upper hand, the old Allen comes punching back. After Allen's stirring statement, an aide adds a coda to the e-mail: The senator doesn't remember the Confederate flag on his Mustang, "but it is possible." ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Expeditions

SURELY THE YOUNG CHINESE director Lu Chuan knows John Ford. In Lu's new film, his second, he has taken an Asian story and has treated it with much that he seems to have learned from Ford. **MOUNTAIN PATROL: KEKEXILI** is set in a region of the Tibetan plateau—called Kekexili—that almost commands a director to remember Monument Valley, the home of so many Ford films. Great mountain ranges border a vast plain. The plain invites action, and wherever the camera goes in this vastness, it has peaks as backdrop. This is not the first time that the Tibetan vastness has been used in Chinese films, nor, I hope, will it be the last. One of the rewards of such films is a reminder of scale: size, human and other, is proportionate to environment, a physical fact that can have some ideational effect.

MOUNTAIN PATROL: KEKEXILI
(Columbia)

THE NOTORIOUS BETTIE PAGE
(Picturehouse)

On that Tibetan plain once lived many thousands of a particular breed of antelope. Hunting them was illegal, but not so long ago poachers began to kill them for their pelts, slaughtering them as wantonly as Americans once killed buffalo. Volunteers, mostly Tibetan, formed patrols to stop the poachers. In 1996, when this film takes place, a reporter from Beijing arrives in a town near the plain to accompany one such patrol and write a story about its work. This old device—introducing a newcomer to whom matters must be explained so that we can learn about them, too—is especially welcome in this setting.

Yet, despite the far-off locale, we soon feel surprisingly comfortable, merely because of the film's shape. Here is a patrol setting out from the stockade (which happens to be a town) to hunt down bad men (poachers here instead of outlaws or warlike natives), riding forth as a latter-day cavalry troop (Land Rovers and small trucks instead of horses), headed by a quiet, staunch, knowledgeable commander (Duo Bujie instead of John Wayne).

Along come the adventures and misadventures, almost all of which fit the Ford temper. Two of the ingredients would not have been in a Ford film. One man sinks into quicksand, not available to Ford; and there are outlying taverns that provide obliging women for a few of the men, not a Ford strophe. Otherwise the encounters, fights, deaths, seem familiar movements in a new ballet.

The story is based on fact: such patrols did operate in the 1990s. (Since then the Chinese government has taken over the guardian job, we are told, and the antelope population has increased.) The most unusual aspect of the film is never underscored. The men in this patrol offer their time and risk death for no other reason than to protect a species of animal from being wiped out. John Wayne and his men had a large national ethos in them: they were serving their country and its progress, and, to be crass, they were paid. These Tibetans are altruists for the sake of antelopes. (Perhaps it was this altruism that persuaded the Chinese to make a film lauding Tibetans.)

Lu Chuan, who wrote the screenplay in Mandarin and Tibetan, directed his film competently but without distinction. In frames and visual interest, he is not yet close to Ford. The cinematography by Cao Yu is not up to the mark of many renderings of similar locales in Ford—nor, for that matter, in *Brokeback Mountain*. Still, inevitably, the vistas awe us. Ford would probably have grumbled about some things in this picture—some moments of confusion about who is who—but he might have been pleased to see that his influence, so marked in many countries' films, had reached China and Tibet.

THE NOTORIOUS BETTIE PAGE is about a young Tennessee woman who became a leading pinup girl in the 1950s. She was seen on innumerable calendars and girlie-magazine covers in conventional undress, and, for some collectors, she was also visible in various fetishistic poses—bondage, chiefly. In time she made her way to New York and beyond, succeeding through the physical endowments that she was eager to share. Gretchen Mol plays her in this film and provides, besides the figure, the commercially viable personalities. At the photographer's command, she can make Page puckish or surprised or teasing or simply happy.

The details of Page's life—marriage, boyfriends, religious concerns, and so on—are less interesting than some peculiarities of character. First is her availability for pickups. Several times, at different stages in her career, she responds to men who speak to her in the street, which seems odd for the good girl that she always considers herself. An early such incident leads to gross sexual assault by at least half a dozen men; but this barbarity has no effect on her willingness to pose seductively. Her dreadful experience does not in the least affect her willingness to play at being available.

Throughout the film Page maintains this air of innocence, doing what she does because she enjoys it, and defending it. Her ready rationale: Adam and Eve were undressed in Eden. She omits the fact that they had not taken off their clothes in order to affect others. And this blithe innocence carefully masks the reason that Page's job exists.

When I was in the magazine business, the sort of items that Page appears in were called "one-hand books." The assumption: one of the reader's hands held the magazine while the other hand was busy. Page, of course, must have known that she was providing this inspiration, but in her 4-H Club–cheery way, she ignores it. At the end of the film, still young, she gives up her career and turns to religion. She is now eighty-three. I'd bet that she is still smiling. She might

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even more aptly be chuckling.

The screenplay, by Mary Harron and Guinevere Turner, based on a book by Richard Foster, has a Scotch-taped feeling, as if scenes had been added when the need for them arose. Harron, who also directed, made *I Shot Andy Warhol* ten years ago about Valerie Solanas, who did the shooting. In that fascinating film, though the story was told absolutely straight, it seemed throughout as if the camera had been tilted to suit a tilted world.

Harron's work here is unclear in its theme or purpose. Was she showing how a woman managed to find a woman's way to success in a man's world? Was Harron interested in Page's delusion about what she was doing? Or did she want to scoff implicitly at the customers who made Page's career possible? We are left wondering. ■

Benny Morris

And Now For Some Facts

The ignorance at the heart of an innuendo.

I.

JOHN J. MEARSHEIMER AND STEPHEN M. Walt's "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" is a nasty piece of work. Some of what they assert regarding the terrorist tactics of certain Zionist groups during the 1930s, and the atrocities committed by Israeli troops in the War of 1948, and the harsh Israeli measures against the Palestinians during the second intifada, and certain activities of the pro-Israel lobby in the United States over the past decades—some of this is correct, and I realize as I write this sentence that it will henceforth be trotted out by the Mearsheimers and Walts of the world, as by their Arab admirers, while they omit the previous sentence and all that now follows. But what these distinguished professors have produced is otherwise depressing to anyone who values intellectual integrity.

Mearsheimer and Walt build their case mainly by means of omission: they tell certain facts while omitting others, sometimes more apt and crucial. And occasionally they distort facts and figures. The thesis of their study, which was supported by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, is that America's support of Israel runs contrary to American national interests, and that it is not grounded in "a compelling moral case." To establish the latter contention, they deny that Israel is the weaker party in the Arab-Israeli conflict; and that it is a democracy; and that "Israel's conduct has been morally superior to [that of] its adversaries."

In order to highlight the authors' methodology and to give an accurate picture of their scholarship, I wish to focus on several historical points that they make to sustain their case. (I will leave it to others to show what should be perfectly obvious: that the pro-Israel lobby is not the conspiratorial tail that wags the American dog.) I must confess to a personal interest in the matter. Like many pro-Arab propagandists at work today, Mearsheimer and Walt often cite my own books, sometimes quoting directly from them, in apparent corroboration of their arguments. Yet their work is a travesty of the history that I have studied and written for the past two decades. Their work is riddled with shoddiness and defiled by mendacity. Were "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" an actual person, I would have to say that he did not have a single honest bone in his body.

II.

I WILL BEGIN WITH THE QUESTION of the balance of forces between Israel and the Arab world—a political-military issue with moral overtones, because it begs the question of who in this conflict was, and remains, the underdog deserving of Western sympathy. Mearsheimer and Walt write that "Israel is often portrayed as weak and besieged, a Jewish David surrounded by a hostile Arab Goliath ... but the opposite image is closer to the truth." For some reason, weakness is commonly seen as entailing moral superiority, an illogical proposition.

I would recommend that they take a look at any atlas and yearbook for the key years of the conflict—1948, 1956, 1967, 1973. Even a child would notice that the Arab world, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf, does actually "surround" Israel and is infinitely larger than the eight-thousand-square-mile Jewish state (which is the size of New Hampshire). He would notice also that the population of the confrontation states—Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq, who were often joined in their wars with Israel by expeditionary forces from Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Yemen—has always been at least twenty times greater than Israel's; and in 1948 it was about fifty times greater. The material resources of the Arab world similarly have been (as they still are) infinitely larger than Israel's.

It is true that Israel's "organizational ability" has enabled it to concentrate and focus its resources where they count in wartime, on the successive battlefields, with far greater efficiency than the Arabs; and it is true that Israel's troops, and especially its officer corps, have always been of a far higher caliber than the Arabs' counterparts; and it is true that the motivation of Israel's troops—often with their backs to the wall—has generally been superior to that of their Arab foes. But this is still a far cry from implying, as Mearsheimer and Walt do, regarding the war in 1947–1949, that Israel won its wars because "the Zionists had larger, better-equipped" forces than the Arabs.

During the October (or Yom Kippur) War in 1973, the Egyptians mustered about one million men under arms, and their Syrian allies some 400,000, when they launched their surprise attacks across the Suez Canal and on the Golan Heights. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) fielded 350,000 to 400,000 troops at most. The Israelis won that war because of superior "grit" and better quality of troops and organization, even though the wings of their better air force and tank corps were badly clipped by the Arabs' massive deployment of state-of-the-art missile shields.

Benny Morris, professor of Middle East history at Ben-Gurion University, is the author of RIGHTEOUS VICTIMS: A HISTORY OF THE ZIONIST-ARAB CONFLICT, 1881–2001 *(Vintage) and* THE BIRTH OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM REVISITED *(Cambridge University Press).*

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As regards the war of 1948, the picture is more complex—but it is certainly not the picture painted by Mearsheimer and Walt of flat Israeli superiority. (I don't know about political science, but history—I mean good history—needs to account for complexity and nuance.) It is true that in the first part of the war, the "civil war" between the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine (from late November 1947 until May 14, 1948, when the state of Israel came into being), the Jews enjoyed a gradually mobilized military superiority, owed primarily to better organization and only marginally to an advantage in some types of weaponry (mortars and possibly machine guns). But the Palestinians probably had an edge in light arms, the main armaments during the civil war. And they enjoyed the support of the 4,000-man Arab Liberation Army, consisting mainly of Syrian and Iraqi volunteers, which had field artillery, which the Yishuv—the Jewish community in Palestine—did not possess. Except in the last few weeks of the civil war, the Arabs probably had an overall edge in men-under-arms—say 15,000–30,000 to the Yishuv's 15,000–25,000; but they proved unable to bring the advantage to bear in the successive battlefields. The militiamen of Nablus and Hebron, where no fighting occurred, saw no reason to come to the aid of their embattled brothers in Jaffa and Haifa.

During the second and conventional phase of the war (mid-May 1948 to January 1949), which was fought between the invading armies of the Arab states—Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan (supplemented by Sudanese, Saudi, Yemeni, and Moroccan contingents)—and the newborn state of Israel, the Arab side began with an overwhelming, or what should have been an overwhelming, advantage in equipment and firepower. In the first fortnight of the invasion, the Arabs had more than seventy combat aircraft, Spitfires and Furies, and the Yishuv had none. (The Israelis assembled and sent into action their first four combat aircraft, Czech-built Messerschmidt 109s, on May 29, and lost two of them.) During the following months, the Arabs continued to enjoy an overwhelming advantage in combat aircraft. Until the end of June, certainly, the Arab invaders possessed a massive superiority in all other types of heavy weaponry: they deployed about two hundred standard armored fighting vehicles (Humbers, Daimlers, and Marmon Harringtons), many of them mounting two- and six-pounder cannon; dozens of tanks (Cruiser, Locust, Mark 6, and Renault); and dozens of artillery pieces. The Israelis had two tanks, one of them without a gun; and one, then two, batteries of light pre–World War I–vintage 65mm Mountain artillery; and makeshift armored cars, civilian trucks patched up with steel plates in Tel Aviv workshops.

During the following months, until the war's practical end in January 1949 (the war formally ended in a series of armistice agreements signed between February and July), the Arab edge in heavy weaponry gradually decreased, partly as a result of attrition and the failure to acquire spare parts and ammunition, and partly because of Israel's successful arms purchases in Czechoslovakia and the West. But at the end of hostilities the Arabs still had more fighter aircraft and tanks, and perhaps even artillery, than the Israelis—though they lacked the expertise to use them and, over time, progressively lacked the necessary spare parts and munitions to deploy them effectively. The Israelis managed to circumvent the international arms embargo that had been imposed on the Middle East; the Arabs tried to do so, but largely failed.

As for manpower, the picture of relative force remains somewhat murky. The reason for the incompleteness of our knowledge is simple. Israel's archives are open, and the figures for the Israeli side are clear and available; but the archives of all the Arab states, which are dictatorships, remain closed. Thus the figures about Arab military manpower at given stages of the war remain partial and tentative, based perforce mainly on IDF intelligence estimates. But according to the latest research, particularly the work of Amitzur Ilan and Yehoshua Ben-Aryeh and Asaf Agin, the invading Arab troops (in the third week of May 1948) numbered 22,000 to 28,000, bolstered by several thousand irregulars, while the Haganah, the mainstream Zionist militia, which became the IDF on June 1, 1948, fielded some 27,000 to 30,000 troops, with another 6,000 elderly Home Guardsmen, and some 2,000 to 3,000 IZL members. (The IZL was the Irgun Zva'i Leumi, or National Military Organization, a terrorist-militia group of the Zionist right.) But the invading Arab forces were all combat troops, teeth formations, who were backed, in terms of logistics, training, and so on, by at least a similar number of rear-echelon base camp troops; whereas the Haganah figure includes both combat troops (all told, about 16,000 to 17,000) and rear echelon units.

In mid-October, the balance stood at 79,000–95,000 to 47,000–53,000 in favor of the Israelis, who vastly expanded their recruitment. But again, the figure for the Arabs represents the numbers engaged in Palestine, not the full roll call of the relevant Arab armies, with their rear echelons. (All these figures relate to ground forces; the air and naval forces of the two sides, which were negligible in terms of manpower and importance, are omitted.) It is perhaps worth adding that in 1948 Israel suffered just over 6,000 dead, one-third of them civilians, out of a total population of 650,000 to 700,000—or one killed and two seriously wounded out of every hundred in the population—in the course of a year-long war that was launched, in two stages, by the Palestinian Arabs (in November–December 1947) and by the Arab states (in May 1948) after they had rejected the United Nations Partition Resolution of November 29, 1947. (Had America suffered a similar proportion of casualties in the Vietnam War, there would have been more than two million dead and four million wounded.) Arab losses in 1948 are uncertain. It is usually estimated that about 8,000 Palestinians died, and that the Arab armies' fatalities were about half that number.

So yes, Israel won each of its wars against the Arab states. But no, this was not because it had greater manpower or more equipment; it usually had less of each. The wars were decided by the failure of the significantly stronger and more populous Arab world to mobilize its resources or concentrate its forces where they counted, or to provide them with adequate leadership.

III.

This brings us to Israel's recent conflict with the Palestinians, on a lower level of intensity but still ongoing, and to its treatment by Mearsheimer and Walt. Without a doubt, the ratio of Israeli power to Palestinian power in 2000–2005, the years of the second intifada, was at least 100:1 in Israel's favor, in terms of raw conventional military strength. (This, without taking into account Israel's nonconventional military capabilities.) This

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intifada, this war, was launched by the Palestinians, who enjoyed the propaganda benefit of underdog status. The photograph of the disheveled stone-throwing or Kalashnikov-brandishing fighter facing down the Merkava Mark-III main battle tank became a representative image of this conflict. But it was a misleading representation. For the fearsome Merkava tanks almost never used their firepower against the Palestinians, much as the IAF F-16s and Apache attack helicopters usually (but not always) attacked empty Palestinian public buildings or individual terrorists in cars. The Hamas and Fatah fighters operated from behind a shield of Palestinian civilians and from crowded urban refugee camps and neighborhoods, and so Israel fought with both hands tied behind its back. Its actual firepower—its tanks, aircraft, and cannon—was never unleashed.

This accounts for the relatively low number of Arab deaths (four thousand in five years of warfare), and the relatively low proportion of Arab to Jewish deaths (3.5:1), as compared with the actual calculus of Israeli versus Arab military strength (100:1) and the relative proportion of armed to unarmed Arab casualties (about 2:1). Most of the Arabs killed in the intifada, despite the fact that it was mostly fought in heavily populated Arab areas, were armed fighters, not civilians. And the ratio of armed to unarmed Arab casualties has steadily risen in recent years as the IDF has perfected its modus operandi and become more careful. The famous battle of the Jenin refugee camp in spring 2002 is an illuminating example. Arab lies and gullible journalism about an indiscriminate slaughter notwithstanding (Human Rights Watch and other non-partisan bodies subsequently upheld the Israeli version), only fifty-three Jeninites died, all but five or six of them armed combatants. Israel lost twenty-three infantrymen in the battle. Had Israel dealt with that Fatah-Hamas bastion as, say, the Russians dealt with Grozny—from afar, with massive ground and aerial bombardments—no Israeli lives would have been lost, and Jenin would no longer be standing.

Throughout the second intifada, Israeli policy was to avoid, so far as possible, harm to non-combatants, and the IDF generally took great operational care to avoid civilian casualties. Some "collateral damage" did occur, given the nature of the battlefield. Some Israeli soldiers were trigger-happy and exceeded orders. But generally the targeted killing of terrorists—who see themselves, quite correctly, as soldiers in a war, and hence are legitimate targets for attack—resulted in few civilian casualties. (The Israeli air and artillery attacks in Gaza earlier this month offer a characteristic example: of eighteen Arabs killed, fifteen or sixteen, by Palestinian admission, were combatants.)

On the other hand, during the second intifada Arab attacks on Israelis claimed twice as many civilians' lives as soldiers' lives. (Mearsheimer and Walt bury this fact in a footnote, without explanation.) This was a result of deliberation and intention, not accident. Throughout the intifada, Hamas, Fatah, and Islamic Jihad primarily targeted "soft" civilian targets (buses, restaurants, shopping malls, and last week a Tel Aviv falafel kiosk), preferring them to "hard" military targets, which were more difficult and more dangerous. The Palestinian objective was to sow terror in Israel's rear areas. The difference in strategy, and all that this implies in terms of moral orientation, was stark. The Palestinian aim was to kill as many civilians as possible; and the Palestinian masses rejoiced in the streets of Gaza and Ramallah every time a suicide bomber successfully blew up a bus or a shopping mall or a café in Israel. And this, historically speaking, was merely a refinement of the Palestinian tactics of terror used against the Yishuv since the 1920s (and not, as Arab propagandists would have it, only after 1967).

The IDF's aim, by contrast, was to kill guerrillas/terrorists and their commanders, such as Sheik Ahmed Yassin. Mearsheimer and Walt misleadingly call him the "spiritual" head of Hamas. One might, with equal accuracy, call Hitler the "spiritual" head of the Nazi Party. Neither actually murdered anyone with his bare hands. But their differences notwithstanding, both were the organizational and operational directors of their respective movements, as well as the movements' "spiritual" leaders.

IV.

In their survey of the conflict's history, Mearsheimer and Walt write that "the mainstream Zionist leadership was not inter-

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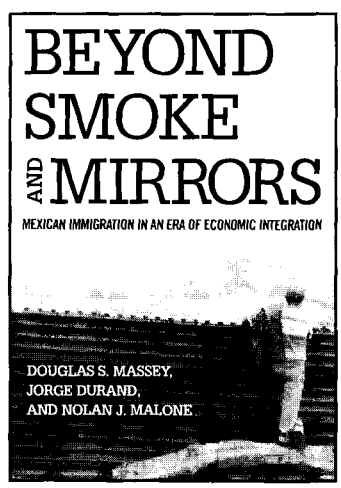

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ested in establishing a bi-national state or accepting a permanent partition of Palestine ... To achieve this goal [of turning all of Palestine into a sovereign Jewish state], the Zionists had to expel large numbers of Arabs from the territory that would eventually become Israel. There was simply no other way to accomplish their objective.... This opportunity came in 1947–1948, when Jewish forces drove up to 700,000 Palestinians into exile.... The fact that the creation of Israel entailed a moral crime against the Palestinian people was well understood by Israel's leaders." Let us examine these assertions one by one.

Mearsheimer and Walt are implicitly arguing that the Zionist movement never really wanted or accepted a compromise—at the very least, that the Jewish national movement was no different from the Palestinian national movement, which always demanded a one-state solution and rejected a compromise based on partition. Now, it is true that Zionism sought the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, not a bi-national state in which Jews would enjoy minority status in yet another Muslim-Arab land or in which there would be temporary Jewish-Muslim parity—which, as everybody understood, given the high Arab birth rate, would quickly be transformed into a state with an Arab majority and a Jewish minority. But the acceptance or non-acceptance of partition is another matter. Mearsheimer and Walt imply that down to (and maybe even beyond) 1948, the Zionist leadership rejected the partition of Palestine. This is simply false, no matter what misleading quotations they cull from eminent Israeli historians.

Until 1936–1937, certainly, the Zionist mainstream sought to establish a Jewish state over all of Palestine. But something began to change fundamentally during the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, which was conducted against the background of resurgent anti-Semitism in Europe and the threat of genocide. In July 1937, the British royal commission headed by Lord Peel recommended the partition of Palestine, with the Jews to establish their own state on some 20 percent of the land and the bulk of the remainder to fall under Arab sovereignty (ultimately to be conjoined to the Emirate of Transjordan, ruled by the Emir Abdullah). The commission also recommended the transfer—by agreement or "voluntarily," and if necessary by force—of all or most of the Arabs from the area destined for Jewish statehood. The Zionist right, the Revisionist movement, rejected the proposals. But mainstream Zionism, representing 80 to 90 percent of the movement, was thrown into ferocious debate; and, shepherded by David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leadership ended up formally accepting the principle of partition, if not the actual award of 20 percent of the land. The movement resolved that the Peel proposals were a basis for further negotiation.

It is true that Ben-Gurion harbored a hope, in 1937, that such a partition would be but a "first step," to be followed by eventual Zionist expansion throughout Palestine. But the years that followed sobered Zionism and changed the movement's thinking. The movement's formal acceptance of the principle of partition was gradually digested and incorporated into the mentality of the Zionist mainstream, which understood that the Jewish people needed an immediate safe haven from European savagery, and that the movement would have to take what history was offering and could gain no more. The Jewish nationalist leaders called this "pragmatism."

By November 1947, the Zionists' reconciliation to a partial realization of their dreams was complete (except on the fringes of the movement), and Zionism's mainstream, led by Ben-Gurion and Weizmann, once and for all internalized the necessity of partition and accepted the U.N. partition resolution. The 1948 war was fought by Israel with a partitionist outlook, and it ended in partition (with the West Bank and East Jerusalem under Jordanian rule and the Gaza Strip controlled by Egypt), despite Israel's military superiority at its conclusion. During the following two decades, down to June 1967, there was a general acceptance by the Israeli mainstream of the fact, and the permanence, of partition.

As is well known, the Israeli victory and conquests of 1967 re-awakened the controversy about partition and for a time empowered the "Greater Israel" anti-partitionists, until their decline and fall, which began with Yitzhak Rabin's election to the premiership in 1992. Partition—or a two-state solution—remained the goal of all Rabin's successors: Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak, and most notably Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert (though not Benjamin Netanyahu), and also of the bulk of the Israeli public. But Mearsheimer and Walt do not venture into this significant field.

The Palestinian story was different. The Palestinian national movement, from its inception up to 2000, from Haj Amin al Husseini to Yasser Arafat, backed by the Arab world, rejected a two-state solution. There was no great debate. The Palestinian leadership rejected the 1937 and 1947 partition plans (and the Begin-Sadat "autonomy plan" of 1978, which would have led to a two-state solution), and insisted that the Jews had no right to even an inch of Palestine. And the Palestinian government of today, led by the popularly elected Hamas, continues to espouse this uncompromising, anti-partitionist one-state position. All of this is completely ignored in Mearsheimer and Walt's "history."

V.

AND NOW TO THE ISSUE OF transfer and expulsion. It is true, as Mearsheimer and Walt observe, quoting me, that "the idea of transfer is as old as modern Zionism and has accompanied its evolution and praxis during the past century." But once again the matter is complicated, and the problem of who said and did what, and where, and when, and why, is all-important. This complexity has proved too great for Mearsheimer and Walt to handle.

Zionist leaders, from Herzl through Ben-Gurion and Weizmann, between 1881 and the mid-1940s, occasionally expressed support for the "transfer" of Arabs, or of "the Arabs," out of the territory of the future Jewish state. But three salient facts must be recalled. First, the Zionist leadership throughout never adopted the idea as part of the movement's political platform; nor did it ever figure in the platforms of any of the major Zionist parties. Second, the Zionist leaders generally said, and believed, that a Jewish majority would be achieved in Palestine, or in whatever part of it became a Jewish state, by means of massive Jewish immigration, and that this immigration would also materially benefit the Arab population

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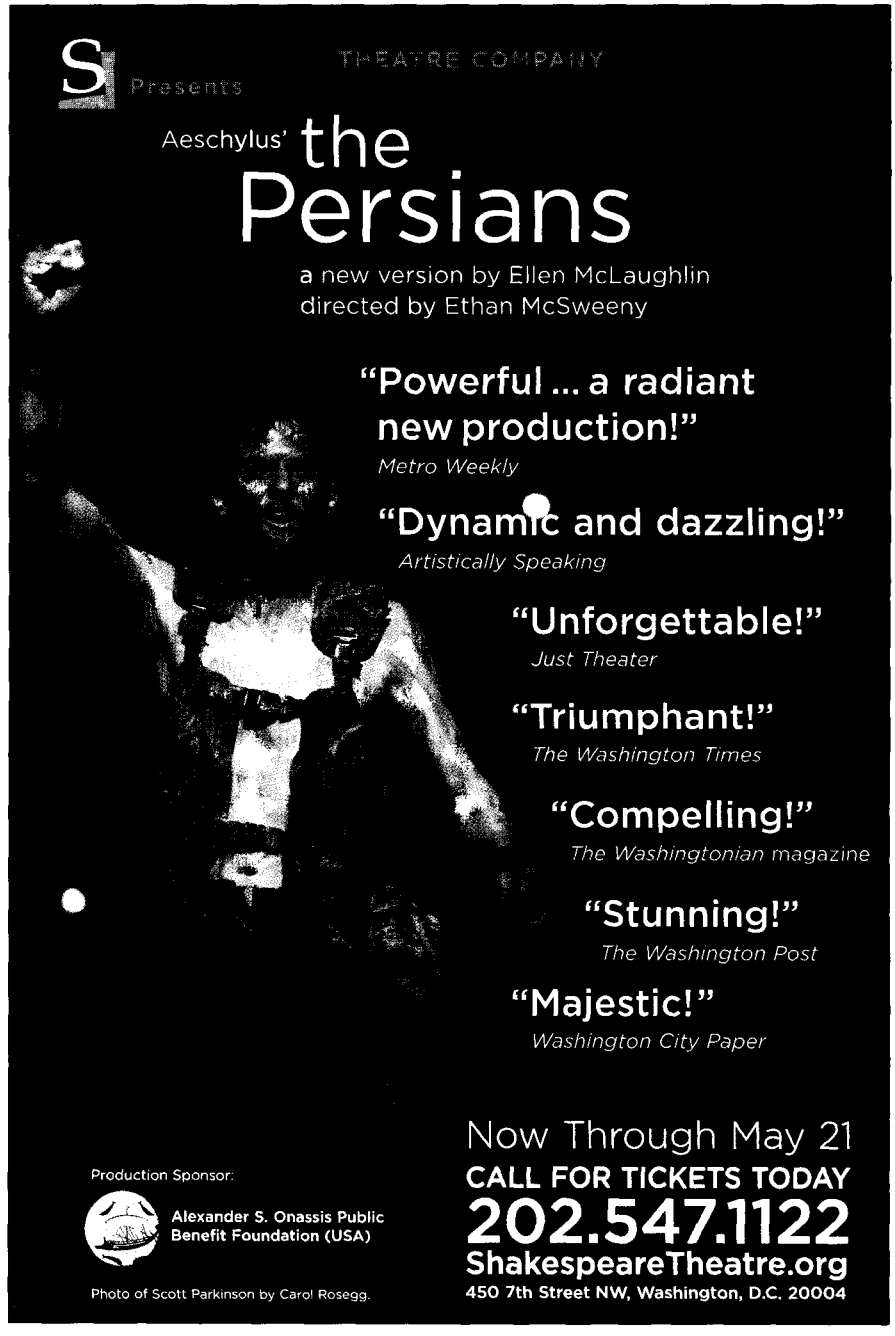
(which it generally did during the Mandate). Third, the awful idea of transfer was resurrected and pressed by Zionist leaders at particular historical junctures, at moments of acute crisis, in response to Arab waves of violence that seemed to vitiate the possibility of Arab-Jewish co-existence in a single state, and in response to waves of European anti-Semitic violence that, from the Zionist viewpoint, necessitated the achievement of a safe haven for Europe's oppressed and threatened Jews. Such a haven required space in which to settle the Jewish masses and an environment free of murderous Arabs: this, indeed, was the logic behind the Peel Commission's transfer recommendation.

Moreover, during the 1930s and 1940s, the espoused policy of the leader of the Palestinian Arab national movement, the Muslim cleric Haj Amin al Husseini, was frankly expulsionist about the Yishuv. He repeatedly stated that he was willing, in his future Palestinian state, to accommodate as citizens only those Jews who had been residents or citizens of Palestine up to 1917—say, 60,000 to 80,000 in all. When asked in 1937 by the Peel Commission what he intended to do with the 80 percent of the Jews who had been born in or come to Palestine after that date, he responded that time will tell. The commissioners understood him to mean that they were destined for expulsion or worse.

In other words, the surge in thinking about transfer in the late 1930s among mainstream Zionist leaders was in part a response to the expulsionist mentality of the Palestinians, which was reinforced by ongoing Arab violence and terrorism. The violence resulted in Britain's severely curtailing immigration to Palestine, thus assuring that many Jews who otherwise might have been saved were left stranded in Europe (and consigned to death), while at the same time foreclosing the traditional Zionist option and aim of achieving a Jewish majority in Palestine through immigration. Mearsheimer and Walt rightly take to task the anti-Arab terrorism of the Irgun in those years; but they omit to mention that the Irgun unleashed its bloody operations in response to Arab terrorism, and that in any case it represented only the fringe right wing of the Zionist movement, of which the mainstream—unlike the Palestinian Arab national movement—consistently rejected and condemned terrorism.

During the early 1940s, against the backdrop of the Holocaust and official British deliberations about a postwar solution to the Palestine problem based on partition, all understood (as had the Peel Commission) that any partition not accompanied by a transfer of Arabs out of the territory of the Jewish-state-to-be would be unstable or pointless, as the large Arab minority, if left in place, would be disloyal and rebellious, and would inevitably enjoy the support of the surrounding Arab world. Such a settlement would solve nothing. British officials and Arab heads of state (who, of course, feared to state these views in public) shared this view. That is why the British Labour Party Executive in 1944 supported partition accompanied by transfer, and that is why Jordan's Emir Abdullah and Iraq's prime minister Nuri Said, among other Arab statesmen, supported such a population transfer if Palestine was to be partitioned.

And, indeed, in 1947–1948 the Palestinian Arabs, supported by the surrounding Arab world, rebelled against the U.N. partition resolution and unleashed a



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bloody civil war, which was followed by a pan-Arab invasion. The war resulted in a large, partial transfer of population. The chaos that all had foreseen if Palestine were partitioned without an orderly population transfer in fact enveloped the country. But this is emphatically not to say, as Mearsheimer and Walt do, that the Zionists' occasional ruminations about transfer were translated in 1947–1948 into a overall plan and policy—unleashed, as they put it, when the "opportunity came," as if what occurred in 1948 was a general and premeditated expulsion.

THE ZIONIST LEADERSHIP accepted the partition plan, which provided for a Jewish state in 55 percent of Palestine with 550,000 Jews and between 400,000 and 500,000 Arabs. The Jewish Agency called on the Arabs to desist from violence, and promised a life of beneficial co-existence. In private, Zionist officials began planning agricultural and regional development that took into account the large Arab minority and its continued citizenship in the new Jewish state. Indeed, down to the end of March 1948, after four months of the Palestinian Arab assault on the Yishuv, backed by the Arab League, Zionist policy was geared to the establishment of a Jewish state with a large Arab minority. Haganah policy throughout these months was to remain on the defensive, to avoid hitting civilians, and generally to refrain from spreading the conflagration to parts of Palestine still untouched by warfare. Indeed, on March 24, 1948, Yisrael Galili, the head of the Haganah National Command, the political leadership of the organization, issued a secret blanket directive to all brigades and units to abide by long-standing official Zionist policy toward the Arab communities in the territory of the emergent Jewish state—to secure "the full rights, needs, and freedom of the Arabs in the Hebrew state without discrimination" and to strive for "co-existence with freedom and respect," as he put it. And this was not a document devised for Western or U.N. eyes, with a propagandistic purpose; it was a secret, blanket, internal operational directive, in Hebrew.

It was only at the start of April, with its back to the wall (much of the Yishuv, in particular Jewish Jerusalem, was being strangled by Arab ambushes along the roads) and facing the prospect of pan-Arab invasion six weeks hence, that the Haganah changed its strategy and went over to the offensive, and began uprooting Palestinian communities, unsystematically and without a general policy. Needless to say, the invasion by the combined armies of the Arab states on May 15 only hardened Yishuv hearts toward the Palestinians who had summoned the invaders, whose declared purpose—as Azzam Pasha, the secretary-general of the Arab League, put it—was to re-enact a Mongol-like massacre, or, as others said, to drive the Jews into the sea. And yet Israel never adopted a general policy of expulsion (or incarceration—as did the United States in its internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, without being under direct existential threat), which accounts for the fact that 160,000 Arabs remained in Israel and became citizens in 1949. They accounted for more than 15 percent of the country's population.

From Mearsheimer and Walt, you would never suspect that the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem in 1948 occurred against the backdrop, and as the result, of a war—a war that for the Jews was a matter of survival, and which those same Palestinians and their Arab brothers had launched. To omit this historical background is bad history—and stark dishonesty. It is quite true, and quite understandable, that the Israeli government during the war decided to bar a return of the refugees to their homes—to bar the return of those who, before becoming refugees, had attempted to destroy the Jewish state and whose continued loyalty to the Jewish state, if they were readmitted, would have been more than questionable. There was nothing "innocent," as Mearsheimer and Walt put it, about the Palestinians and their behavior before their eviction-evacuation in 1947–1948 (as there was nothing innocent about Haj Amin al Husseini's work for the Nazis in Berlin from 1941 to 1945, broadcasting anti-Allied propaganda and recruiting Muslim troops for the Wehrmacht). And what befell the Palestinians was not "a moral crime," whatever that might mean; it was something the Palestinians brought down upon themselves, with their own decisions and actions, their own historical agency. But they like to deny their historical agency, and many "sympathetic" outsiders like to abet them in this illusion, which is significantly responsible for their continued statelessness.

VI.

ONE LAST HISTORICAL POINT, about contemporary history. Mearsheimer and Walt recycle the canard that Israel and the United States offered the Palestinians nothing of worth, nothing that they should have accepted, in the negotiations in 2000. They write that Barak's peace proposals at Camp David offered the Palestinians "a disarmed and dismembered set of 'Bantustans' under *de facto* Israeli control." But according to the most reliable witnesses and participants in the talks—and the Palestinian side, for good reason, has never pro-

To Le Moyne

Walking out toward the Atlantic,
low, dark clouds, great crabs, scuttled the horizon;
my eyes stung by sand, my face whipped by hair,
my body, almost a kite, wanted to lift off
and measure the weight of the wind.

Was it here, Le Moyne, you witnessed
your Huguenot shipmates, stranded by a hurricane,
hacked to death, throats slit by the Spaniards,
while you, O armadillo, burrowing owl, indigo snake,
hid under the saw palmetto?

Then did you turn away? Did you pray
to the Timucuan's rain god
as lightning seared the earth, and blood,
soaking into the scrub oak roots,
unfurled the resurrection fern?

Then, two gopher tortoises,
elbowing through the dunes,
the larger one nudging the smaller along,
stopped to taste pale yellow petals.
Could you resist the argument of their domed shell?
Were they the answer as the storm steered for
the interior?

MARK McKAIN

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duced a detailed description of the negotiations at Camp David, a day-by-day account of who offered what and when—by the end of the Camp David negotiation in the summer of 2000 Barak had offered the Palestinians a state comprising 90 to 91 percent of the West Bank, 100 percent of the Gaza Strip, and functional control of parts of East Jerusalem. A bridge or tunnel would have connected the West Bank and Gaza. Was this really not a reasonable basis for Palestinian sovereignty? But Arafat said no and walked out, and the Palestinians launched the second intifada.

And unlike what readers might infer from Mearsheimer and Walt, this was not the end of that year's diplomatic process. In December, President Clinton—with Barak's approval—improved the deal, offering the Palestinians 94 to 96 percent of the West Bank (with territorial compensation elsewhere for the 4 to 6 percent lost), 100 percent of the Gaza Strip, sovereignty over East Jerusalem including at least half of the Old City, sovereignty over the surface of the disputed Temple Mount, and massive help to rehabilitate the refugees. Again the Palestinians said no, and continued shooting. The Israeli Cabinet, with a heavy heart, endorsed the Clinton parameters. The Americans and the Israelis, contrary to Mearsheimer and Walt, most certainly offered the Palestinians "a viable state of their own." It was precisely such a state that the Palestinians, in their stupidity, turned down.

Accurate descriptions and maps of the Israeli offer in July and the Israeli-endorsed Clinton parameters of December—as well as the Palestinians' spurious map of what was offered them—may be found in Dennis Ross's *The Missing Peace*. Ross was the chief American Middle East negotiator. (Mearsheimer and Walt rely on a map contained in *The New Intifada*, edited by Roane Carey; but Ross, unlike Carey, was party to and knew in great detail what went on, and was privy to all the documentation.) In his autobiography, Clinton backs to the hilt Ross's version of what was said and offered (as does Shlomo Ben-Ami, who was the Israeli foreign minister at the time, in his recent book *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy*, which elsewhere is highly critical of Israel). All three state clearly that Arafat said no. Mearsheimer and Walt, amateur students of the subject with a political ax to grind, transform this no into a yes.

I SAY AMATEUR STUDENTS BECAUSE there are outrageously incorrect historical assertions in Mearsheimer and Walt's work, often buried in the footnotes. For instance, footnote 10 states: "It is also worth noting that the British favored the Zionists over the Palestinians during the period of the British Mandate (1919–1948)." But during the Mandate, both Arabs and Jews were "Palestinians"; and the Mandate began de facto in 1917–1918, when the British conquered Palestine, in two stages, from the Turks; or in 1920, when the civilian administration was installed and the San Remo conference endorsed the Mandate ("1919" is in any case a meaningless date in this regard). And most importantly, the British government clearly "favored" Zionism in the years between 1917 and 1936 (though many of its officers and officials in Palestine, including some of the high commissioners, did not); but it certainly did not in the years between 1938 and 1948. In 1939, Whitehall published a White Paper that portended and backed the establishment in Palestine of an Arab-majority state (Husseini rejected that, too); and in 1947 the British abstained when the U.N. General Assembly authorized partition and Jewish statehood; and in 1947–1948 the British provided the Egyptian and Iraqi armies with arms and advice, and in 1948 they provided money, arms, and leadership to the Jordanian Army, the Arab Legion, as it battled the Jewish state under the command of a British officer, John Glubb. The British can hardly be described in 1939–1948 as pro-Zionist, though Ben-Gurion's traditional depiction of them in 1948 as orchestrating the pan-Arab assault on Israel was also wide of the mark.

Consider some other examples. On page 6, Mearsheimer and Walt assert that Jonathan Pollard, a Jewish-American naval intelligence analyst in the 1980s, provided Israel with classified American material, "which Israel reportedly passed onto the Soviet Union to gain more exit visas for Soviet Jewry." To the best of my knowledge, this is a lie. On page 9, Mearsheimer and Walt write that "citizenship [of Israel] is based on the principle of blood kinship." This is an outrageous assertion, with the worst possible echoes. The truth is that since the state's inception, 15 to 20 percent of Israel's citizens have been Muslim and Christian Arabs. In 1948–1949, citizenship was granted to all persons living in the country, regardless of race or religion, and it is granted by law after five years of residency and the satisfaction of various qualifications (as in all western democracies) to applicants today regardless of race or religion—though it is true that Jewish immigrants can and do receive citizenship upon arrival in Israel, and it is also true that Israel is a Jewish state, as France is (and, I hope, will remain) a French state and Britain is a British state. On page 12, Mearsheimer and Walt write, referring to my book *Israel's Border Wars, 1949–1956*, that Israel's retaliatory strikes in the early 1950s "were actually part of a broader effort to expand Israel's borders." This is incorrect—and had they used my book honestly, they could not have reached such a conclusion. On page 10, they observe that "The Arabs ... had been in continuous possession of [Palestine] for 1300 years," which is incorrect, and that there were "only about 15,000 Jews in Palestine" in 1882, which is also incorrect. (Typically, Mearsheimer and Walt cite as their authority Justin McCarthy's *The Population of Palestine*, without noting that he also assumed the existence of additional thousands of Jews in Palestine who were not Ottoman citizens.) And so on.

IN THEIR INTRODUCTION, MEARSHEIMER and Walt tell their readers that "the facts recounted here are not in serious dispute among scholars.... The evidence on which they rest is not controversial." This is ludicrous. I would offer their readers a contrary proposition: that the "facts" presented by Mearsheimer and Walt suggest a fundamental ignorance of the history with which they deal, and that the "evidence" they deploy is so tendentious as to be evidence only of an acute bias. *That* is what will be not in serious dispute among scholars. ■

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Alan Wolfe

Getting In

A NATION BY DESIGN: IMMIGRATION POLICY IN THE FASHIONING OF AMERICA
By Aristide R. Zolberg
(Harvard University Press, 658 pp., $39.95)

I.

"I WOULD HOPE THE AMERICAN people are smart enough to smell the foul odor that's coming out of the United States Senate.... Those people in the Senate who are basically looking out for the interests of somebody else other than the American people will have to pay the political price and I'm sure Senator McCain, when he runs for president, will find that out." So spoke Representative Dana Rohrabacher in response to a recent bipartisan Senate effort to pass an immigration bill less harsh than the draconian one he, and most of his House Republican colleagues, favored. (This was before Rohrabacher went on to urge that we use prisoners rather than immigrants to harvest California's crops.) In just a few words, Rohrabacher touched on every one of American nativism's elements: the fawning populism, the threats of blackmail and reprisal, the unusually ugly language. Immigration debates are like that. No other issue (except, of course, race) brings out so prominently the demagogues among us. If you find this an exaggeration, watch any television program featuring Lou Dobbs.

Interestingly enough, the bill that Rohrabacher opposed—named after its unlikely co-sponsors Senators John McCain and Edward Kennedy—would easily have fallen into the category of restrictive legislation if it had been launched into a different political environment. After all, this more liberal bill called for increased spending on border enforcement, limited future visas to 400,000 per year, established procedures designed to encourage immigrants to return to their countries of origin, and increased fines for the hiring of illegal immigrants. But McCain-Kennedy did allow illegal immigrants currently in the United States to begin a laborious journey toward green-card status, and this was enough for its opponents to cry "amnesty," which is anathema to House Republicans.

Still, the ideas that inspired McCain-Kennedy may not be dead. With massive and moving demonstrations throughout the country, immigrants have won increased public sympathy; and in the face of the voting power that they may begin to exercise, hard-line stances such as those adopted by House Republicans could backfire politically. But even if immigration reform does happen, many concessions will have to be made to nativist sentiment as the price for giving illegals a fair chance to become legal. There is little doubt that the American mood toward immigration these days is more restrictive than it is welcoming.

It is not just the rhetoric surrounding it that makes immigration different from all other political issues. On some issues that have captured public attention—Terri Schiavo, stem cells—the public is more moderate than the ideology-driven zealotry of America's leaders. But not immigration. On this issue, traces of bipartisan compromise can be found in Washington, while a deep polarization exists outside the Beltway.

Like abortion, immigration raises profound moral questions about our obligations to the weak and the vulnerable; but unlike abortion, it also carries with it economic consequences that directly involve business and labor. As with any foreign policy issue, immigration touches on our relations with allies and enemies; but it is discussed almost exclusively in terms of its effects at home, irrespective of its consequences abroad. The Bush tax cuts divided people along ideological lines, but in contrast to tax cuts, the lines with respect to immigration are so imprecise that conservatives and liberals find themselves on one side fighting furiously against conservatives and liberals on the other side. Compared with Social Security reform or the war in Iraq, immigration affects fewer Americans in any direct way (and does not result in significant loss of life for those it does affect), but unlike those issues, it breaks once solid political parties into warring factions and is capable of shifting the balance of power from one party to the other.

IMMIGRATION, IN SUM, STANDS alone among the questions urgently facing American society, with its own coalitions, ideological appeals, voting patterns, and history. No wonder, then, that the debate over immigration is anything but straightforward. Nothing in either the House or Senate bills says anything about religion, but the Catholic Church is deeply engaged in the issue, evangelical Protestants are split over it, and Jews carry historical memories that flood their minds every time the subject comes up. Immigration is frequently viewed as a civil rights issue—the reforms of 1965 were passed in the wake of the Civil Rights Act of the previous year—but African Americans have never been strong supporters of expanded immigration. Those who talk about states' rights will become strong advocates of national authority if state governments, responsive to agricultural and business interests, look the other way when illegal immigrants attend public schools, receive welfare, and apply for drivers' licenses. Liberals and Democrats will wax enthusiastically about America's commitment to Latinos while gutting immigration reform to reduce their political vulnerability. Throughout American history, immigration has been opposed by eugenicists and population-control enthusiasts, and analogous (and obviously less odious) concerns about the environment have replaced them, leading such organizations as the Sierra Club to be either hostile to or divided over immigration reform. Recent immigrants themselves cannot always be counted on to support greater immigration, even of their own ethnic and racial groups. And, as Peter Beinart has pointed out in these pages, conservatives who trumpet the power of the market and denigrate government routinely call on government to prevent the market from functioning when the commodity in question is immigrant labor rather than bananas or softwood lumber.

When it comes to immigration, the only surprise is surprise itself. There is little in the biography of any particular politician—not party, not ideology, not geography, not even family history—that can readily predict his or her stance on controlling America's borders. (Besides Rohrabacher, the other major opponent of immigration in Congress is a man

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named Tancredo.) On this issue, the talking points have not yet been written and the focus groups have not yet focused. Immigration policy is for people who love their politics raw and unscripted. It is as if debates over immigration constitute a vast thought-experiment, repeated test cases designed to tell Americans who they are and, more importantly, who they want to be.

II.

IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY the politics of immigration take the form they do, read Aristide R. Zolberg's richly informative book immediately. Zolberg, a political scientist formerly known for his work on Africa and Europe, has become increasingly fascinated by what scholars in his field call "American political development." Fashioned as an attempt to restore to political science a concern with the real world that rational choice theory left behind (although lately there are efforts to bring these approaches together), American political development favors history over economics as the first cousin of political science. Political scientists inspired by this approach want to know how the American state formed itself, developed its authority, adopted particular policies in the face of domestic and international transformations, responded to and in turn influenced legal regimes, and spawned constellations of parties and interest groups.

The field of American political development promises answers to questions such as these: is America exceptional, and if so, how? What policy options today were foreclosed by policy decisions taken in previous times? Are practices and procedures we tend to consider as well-established—a competitive two-party system, federalism, separation of powers—really contingent and therefore amenable to future changes? An interest in American political development causes many a political scientist to spend unusual amounts of time in archives—not just to tell a story, but also to ponder why organized labor is weaker in the United States than in other comparable countries, how wars have shaped the distribution of political authority, which groups obtain and use suffrage and which do not, and why the American administrative bureaucracy lacks effective coordination.

American political development has produced a number of major works, including Richard Bensel's *The Political Economy of American Industrialization, 1877–1900*, Rogers M. Smith's *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*, Stephen Skowronek's *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities*, and Sidney M. Milkis's *The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal*. These are important and valuable books—but it has to be said that, in all, American political development has not yet delivered on many of its promises. Nobody has quite resolved whether the United States really is exceptional; European welfare states are being cut back in ways similar to American retrenchment and the question of why there is no socialism in the United States has been replaced by the question of why there is no socialism anywhere. The notion of "path dependency" enthralls nearly all students of American political development, but pointing out how certain options were foreclosed when others were chosen is not much of a theoretical insight. History does help to explain why the American state has the special properties that it does, but it cannot help much in explaining why Republicans are now in power rather than Democrats—or why Republicans, despite their anti-statist ideology, inevitably expand government's size and reach.

One reason for the mixed success of American political development is that, in their efforts to explain the American nation-state, political scientists have paid a great deal of attention to the state and relatively little to the nation. Policies, parties, procedures: they all influence and are influenced by government. But government exists within a nation whose identity, at least in this country, is as contingent as the policies that government adopts. Americans did not create a nation by inheriting a conception of who they were from some mystic past and then asking new arrivals to adopt to it. Instead, we barely began as a nation at all. Although the United States declared its independence from Great Britain in 1776 and adopted the Constitution in 1787, it did not become a nation until the ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments in the wake of the Civil War. (Before the Civil War, leaders spoke about the Union, not the nation.) And even when America finally did become a nation, waves of immigrants—large numbers of whom were neither Protestant nor English-speaking—raised complicated questions about what kind of nation it was going to be. Americans love to debate their identity precisely because their identity is sufficiently flexible to be debatable.

And so immigration deserves the passion, the polarization, and sometimes even the excessive rhetoric associated with it. True, such debates fuel a politics of symbolism ripe with opportunities for demagoguery. But symbolic politics are not some epiphenomenon that fills in the gap when "real" issues such as Medicare or energy policy lose their saliency. People may not consume symbols, but they are often willing to die for them. Nations, moreover, not only have symbols, they also are symbols. When people say they are proud to be Americans—or these days when, exasperated by George W. Bush, they say the opposite—they are not talking about how much money they make or whether the trains run on time. (In this country, they are especially not talking about how the trains run on time.) People take pride in, or express shame over, what their country stands for. If it symbolizes freedom and democracy, they beam. If it is seen to represent imperial overreach, they blanch.

ENTER THE TERRAIN OF SYMBOLS, the traditional preserve of anthropologists and sociologists rather than political scientists, and before long the question of culture will arise. Most nations define themselves through their culture: the language they speak, the literature and music they produce, the history they share, the monuments they treasure. Yet while there clearly is such a thing as American culture, this country, because it refashions its identify so frequently, does not attach its identity to its culture to the extent that most other nations do. Samuel P. Huntington thinks otherwise, of course; in *Who Are We?*, his recent book lamenting America's relatively liberal immigration policies, he argued that a culture shaped by dissenting Protestants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is in danger from arrivals from Mexico. But Aristide Zolberg will have none of that. Although his method is scholarly and his tone frequently dispassionate, Zolberg dismisses Huntington

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as advancing "an unimaginative revival of ancient nativist stereotypes" little different from those of earlier isolationists such as Henry Cabot Lodge.

Zolberg is the anti-Huntington of our time, and the reason is not hard to find. If there is anything exceptional about the United States, it lies in the country's artificiality—or, if less derogatory implications are warranted, its artifice. Diverse from the start, we have never defined our identity biologically. But neither have we replaced biology with a conception of culture meant to appear unchanging and beyond the control of the people who shape it. A capacity to adopt the culture we want has been especially true of our more expansive periods, when we welcomed immigrants from quite different cultures with enthusiasm. But it is even true of our most restrictive periods, when, fixed on protecting a racial balance favoring whites or a religious balance favoring Christians, we nonetheless brought people to our shores who both assimilated to the culture they found and changed the culture they found through their assimilation.

There is a tendency, when discussing immigration, to define some periods as normal and to view others as conforming to or deviating from the norm. As Zolberg rightly points out, there is not now, and there never has been, a norm that provides a definitive statement of the reciprocal obligations owed by present Americans to future ones. Immigration policy is always improvised, done on the fly. For that very reason, immigration, rather than fiscal policy or statecraft, is the best subject for utilizing the tools of American political development. What we discuss when we talk about immigration is the political development of America.

III.

So how, then, did America develop? Because we were a land before we were a nation, and because the land we inhabited was sparsely populated, we debated immigration policy even when we were a British colony. Among the many charges that Americans leveled against George III in their Declaration of Independence, there was this: "He has endeavored to prevent the Population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands." This was not a pre-ordained complaint; the American colonies could have continued to accept whomever the British sent, content to allow the shape of their political system to be determined by forces outside of their borders. But they chose to become their own country by allowing people from other countries to enter, a paradox that has defined American immigration policy ever since.

Once the decision was made to acquire more people, the question of what kind of people they should be took priority. From the start, prominent voices urged that the new country should not admit everyone who wanted to come—or, in the colonial situation, everyone who was sent. "Thou art called our MOTHER COUNTRY," Benjamin Franklin wrote in 1751, "but what good Mother ever sent Thieves and Villains to accompany her Children; to corrupt some with their infectious Vices, and murder the rest?" Franklin would spend the rest of his life in opposition to capacious immigration, including not only criminals and paupers in his category of the unwanted, but Germans and other non-native English speakers.

Read Franklin today, and you might conclude that nativism was as American as apple pie. But the truth is that the forces pushing for a generous conception of American citizenship were too powerful to resist. America's first great nation-builder, Alexander Hamilton, knew full well—as, by the way, did Franklin himself—that if the United States was to develop industry rather than settle for agriculture, it would need to open itself to the importation of workers hoping to better their lives. Hamilton's concerns, like those of business lobbyists today, were practical more than theoretical. As if anticipating what economists would later call "dual labor markets," Hamilton envisioned a system in which low-wage workers from abroad would work in the newly emerging factories, leading native-born Americans of means to become embodiments of republican virtue by avoiding the degradation of industrial employment.

An economic panic in 1792 stymied Hamiltonianism, as did the endorsement by Federalists of the Alien and Sedition Acts (the forerunners of today's Patriot Act). But Hamiltonianism would inspire immigration policy as it did foreign and domestic policy. Whenever industrial expansion beckoned, legions of workers would appear in American ports.

Opposition to immigration also ran into practical considerations from the start. Thomas Jefferson's agrarian republicanism was in theory hostile to immigration, but when the Federalist Party turned nativist with the Alien Act, Jefferson saw an opportunity to win voters to his side; and Irish immigrants in New York may well have sealed his victory in 1800. While Hamilton, defending his party, began to argue against immigrants' receiving the vote immediately upon arrival, Jefferson started to move in the other direction. As their mutual flip-flop suggests, economic needs and opportunistic politics left little room for intellectual consistency on the immigration question.

No one expressed the ambivalence toward immigration in the early years of the American republic better than Tench Coxe, an economic adviser to both Hamilton and Jefferson. In a paper read before the Society for Political Enquiries in 1787, Coxe declared that "the present situation of America renders it necessary to promote the influx of people; and it is equally clear, that we have a right to restrain that influx, whenever it is likely to prove hurtful to us." There is a tendency to view battles over immigration as fights between nativists wanting to close the borders and cosmopolitans wanting to keep them open. Some thinkers and activists fit easily into one or the other of these camps: Tom Paine was as welcoming to immigrants as Ben Franklin was hostile. But even though the United States was founded by leaders trained in philosophy and adept at public argument, Coxe's inability to land on one side or the other reflected a reality in which philosophy took second place to state-building.

Immigration, in other words, did not follow from a preconceived idea of the form that the American state should take. On the contrary, the American state was formed out of clashes over economics and politics, and American immigration was held hostage to those clashes. For this reason, Zolberg's title is somewhat misleading. America is "a nation by design" in the sense that it did not spring full-blown out of nature. But its design was haphazard; no single architect drew up the plans. Debates over immigration tended to be retrospective;

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after the doors were opened (or closed), we then discussed the reasons.

ALTHOUGH IT WAS SHAPED more by historical circumstance than by political philosophy, immigration had consequences for how states should organize and justify their political arrangements. Worried about receiving too many foreigners lacking in republican virtue—and unwilling to endorse conceptions of a free labor market that might undermine their system of slavery at home—Americans in the early years of the republic still developed an immigration policy quite radical for its time. If workers were free to come here, employers in Europe would have less control over their workforce. If immigrants were to be welcomed from non-Protestant countries, religious tolerance could not lag far behind. In fact, Roman Catholics received the benefits of full American citizenship fifty years before British Catholics received them in the United Kingdom, and Jews were eligible for citizenship in this country before they were in France. If the number of eligible voters expanded with each election, elites would not be able to count on deference to maintain their hold on power; immigration policy and the rise of American democracy grew together. The American approach to immigration shattered assumptions about land, belonging, exit, and loyalty that had existed in Europe for centuries. As a consequence of immigration, Zolberg writes, "a distinctive society emerged, combining a rapidly emerging market economy with liberal political structures, and harboring a middle-class culture derided by European elites as uniquely vulgar." Immigration not only shaped our society; by aligning itself with expansion in economics and openness in politics, it defined it.

Still, no sooner did immigrants begin to arrive in substantial numbers than second thoughts began to be uttered. When he visited the United States in 1831, Tocqueville thought he had discovered a recipe for democratic stability: he found here an "Anglo-American" population with plenty of available land, conditions ripe for what today we would call upward mobility. But Tocqueville then began to notice the presence of immigrants in the United States, and the more he pondered their significance, the more he worried. "One also encounters in their midst a multitude of Europeans whom misfortune and misconduct drive, day in, day out, toward the shores of the new world," he wrote in a footnote to *Democracy in America*. "These men bring to the United States our greatest vices, and lack any of the interests which might offset their influence."

Tocqueville was not the only one to express reservations about immigration. Samuel F.B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph and one of this country's great nativists, first published his thoughts on the dangers of immigration three years after Tocqueville came here. Morse, Zolberg points out, was as much a Jacksonian Democrat as a xenophobe. As with the founding generation, immigration, in Morse's view, while not deriving from a philosophical view of the world, nonetheless raised deep philosophical issues. "What is at stake," Zolberg observes in a summation of Morse's arguments, "is no less than America's unique world-historical mission."

GENERALLY FRIENDLY TO INcreased immigration, Zolberg does not dismiss the concerns of Tocqueville and Morse as frenzied irrationality. The Catholic Church in the 1820s and 1830s, he reminds his readers, was no friend of liberalism or democracy; *Mirari Vos*, one of the papal encyclicals denouncing liberalism, was published in 1832, the same year that Tocqueville began to write his great book. In the years between Jacksonian democracy and the outbreak of the Civil War, moreover, ideological lines quite different from those of our day predominated. The Know-Nothings may have opposed Catholic immigration, but they also denounced slavery; whereas the Democrats of that time, anxious to increase the number of immigrants who would vote for them, supported the South in its desire to maintain its peculiar institution. If you were a right-thinking liberal in the 1840s and 1850s who wanted to see urban corruption curtailed, government more involved in the regulation of economic activity, and slavery abolished, you would have voted for the party that supported greater control over America's borders. These were roughly the forces that combined to pass the Passenger Act of 1855, described by Zolberg as "the most significant victory for restriction to date at the national level." Only a slowing down in the number of arriving immigrants in the five years preceding the Civil War stopped the restrictive movement of the times.

In their own way, mid-century nativists understood the huge transformation the United States was about to undergo, which is why they so furiously opposed it. Still, their campaign to limit immigration, facing the capitalist juggernaut about to burst on the scene, was doomed to fail. Hence Lincoln, who won the presidency in 1860 with the help of the nativist vote, by 1863 was calling for a new and less restrictive immigration policy, even while fighting a civil war. The Lincoln administration added a new twist to the political economy of immigration; rather than relying on laissez-faire, an economic theory at the time associated with the Democratic Party, Republicans envisioned a system in which government would work hand in glove with private firms, such as the American Emigrant Company, to bring foreign workers together with American employers. One of the most visible industries demanding cheap labor from abroad was the railroad industry; the Central Pacific Railroad, formed by Leland Stanford and Collis Huntington, was organized in 1861, and despite Stanford's fear of an "inferior race," it was not long before large numbers of Chinese found their way to the American West to lay track. As a result of industrial expansion, immigration, once derived primarily from Europe, had become global in its reach.

SINCE CHINESE WORKERS WERE first used as strikebreakers, and since the emerging labor movement understood full well the capitalist desire to pay low wages, the years after the Civil War also marked the entry of labor as a major player in immigration debates, generally on the side of exclusion. "These imported men show no disposition to become citizens of this country, but, on the contrary, seek to obtain a certain sum of money ... and with it return to Italy or Hungary," complained Knights of Labor leader Terence Powderly. Martin Foran, most likely the first labor union official elected to Congress, led a campaign to forbid foreigners abroad to enter into labor contracts with American firms, a way of upholding the principle of voluntary immigration while simultaneously trying to prevent intentional efforts to hold down wages. The idea behind both complaints, Zolberg writes, was to distinguish between sojourners—those who intended to return home after making whatever money they could here—and those

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insistent on becoming American citizens. That distinction continues to this day, only now restrictionists insist that the problem with sojourners is not that they choose to leave but that they choose to stay.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, the transformation that worried immigration's opponents in the years before the Civil War was complete; we were now a major industrial power, and as such we were a leading importer of workers. The main question was no longer whether immigration could be stopped—so long as big business dominated politics, it could not be—but whether it could be regulated. Social scientists certainly believed that it could be. The American Economics Association, which was founded by critics of laissez-faire, some of whom were motivated by strong religious convictions, wanted to control immigration for the same reason that it wanted to control the free market; in both cases, freedom for the few meant exploitation for the many. Protestant reformers—the children of the abolitionists who wanted slavery ended—also joined the cause; Zolberg points out the similarities between those who wanted to control drinking and those who wanted to control the number of arriving foreign workers. Even immigrants themselves began to have qualms about immigration, among them the labor leader Samuel Gompers.

Most important of all was a political change in the South. Once friendly to immigration on the ground that it would increase the percentage of whites in states below the Mason-Dixon line, Southerners began to listen to the frequently racist rhetoric emerging among immigration opponents in the North with a sense of "I told you so" glee. Although groups such as the American Jewish Committee remained sympathetic to immigration as the nineteenth century drew to a close, the tide was clearly beginning to turn in favor of restriction.

THE TIDE WOULD TURN INTO A tidal wave in the first decades of the twentieth century. A combination of fears contributed to the new mood, including fear of a cholera epidemic in the Middle East and Russia, fear of large numbers of Jews finding a new life in New York and other cities, and fear of involvement in the European political troubles that would contribute to World War I. Henry Cabot Lodge, a New England patrician, embodied the new mood. Instrumental in forming the Immigration Restriction League in 1894, Lodge helped change the language of immigration restriction from one of economics to one of race. Lodge was not successful in his efforts to enact literacy tests for new arrivals or to include data about race in the census. Yet his efforts once again underscored the strange alliances that formed around the immigration issue; patrician conservatives and labor-union radicals found themselves on the same side, with industry and its allies on the other.

Lodge is best known today for his opposition to the League of Nations treaty negotiated by Woodrow Wilson in the aftermath of World War I. Isolationism and restrictionism reinforced each other; an unwillingness to work with other nations was accompanied by an unwillingness to receive people from other nations. When an economic slowdown in 1922 softened the demand for foreign labor, the stage was set for the modern Republican Party to make a place in its worldview for nativism. "We want the beaver type of man," wrote Labor Secretary James Davis in 1923. "We want to keep out the rat-type."

WITH RESPECT TO IMMIgration, the 1920s became the decade of quotas. In 1924, Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act, which limited immigration from any particular country to 2 percent of the total number of immigrants from that country living in the United States in 1890. (Johnson-Reed would remain the law of the land until the 1960s.) Why did business support restriction when it formerly had opposed it? "What tipped the scales," Zolberg concludes, "was that businessmen were not merely capitalists but also social elites, swayed by concern for cultural regulation as much as by balance sheet imperatives. They sought to keep 'Bohunks,' 'Kikes,' and 'Dagoes' out of the country for the same reason they excluded them from their clubs and universities."

The restrictions imposed in the 1920s closed off one possible escape from Hitler's persecutions and eventually the Holocaust. Zolberg oddly downplays the significance of anti-Semitism as a cause of these restrictions. In Zolberg's view, Breckinridge Long, the assistant secretary of state for administration under FDR—exactly the kind of man who would keep Jews out of both his country and his country club—was more motivated by security concerns than by racial and religious bigotry. Yet hostility toward refugees would continue after Germany's defeat rendered security considerations irrelevant. Even as the Cold War with the Soviet Union made efforts to restrict the relocation of Nazism's victims difficult, Congress in 1948 cut down the number of refugees allowed into the country and "mortgaged" future admissions by counting them against the quotas established by Johnson-Reed. Whatever lessons Americans learned from World War II, generosity toward foreigners was not one of them. In 1952, Congress passed (over Harry Truman's veto) the McCarran-Walter Act, which revised (and preserved) the national-origins system and made it easier for the government to expel immigrants for ideological reasons.

GIVEN THESE FIVE OR SIX decades of restrictionism, it is remarkable that the United States returned to more expansive ideas about immigration in the 1960s. In part, immigration liberalization was the revenge of the Catholics—now America's largest religious denomination—against the Protestants who once sought to exclude them; John F. Kennedy had both idealistic and practical reasons for courting immigrants, as does his brother today. In addition, the soaring rhetoric of the civil rights movement put national-origins quotas on the rhetorical defensive. But immigration reform was also possible because immigrants had become harder to find. In 1965, when Congress abolished national-origins quotas, the percentage of Americans who were foreign-born was at its lowest since the 1830s.

The 1965 law had dramatic consequences, not only stimulating vast new groups of arrivals, but bringing in the bulk of them from non-European countries. Among the conspiratorially inclined, there lingers a feeling that pro-immigrant forces in Congress engaged in subterfuge to open the borders when no one was paying much attention. Yet the radicalism of the 1965 law is better explained by the fact that almost no one understood how radical it would be. Now it seems obvious that if you give immigrants the right to bring over their spouses, then new spouses can bring over siblings who then can bring over their

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Suicide Bombers in Israel— What Do They Really Want?

Are those who kill innocent civilians seeking freedom and peace . . . or do they have other motivations?

What are the facts?

It's easy to sympathize with Arabs in the disputed Israeli territories and Gaza who live in squalid conditions and economic hopelessness. Indeed, many Westerners believe it's this desperate poverty, plus strict Israeli security measures, that drive suicide bombers to blow themselves up in pizza parlors, buses and college cafeterias.

Unfortunately, this romanticized image of the suicide bomber doesn't square with the facts.

Who are these suicide bombers? Study after study shows that the primary motivation of suicide bombers is neither desperation nor depression nor hopelessness. Indeed most suicide bombers are middle-class, educated and emotionally stable. Noted psychologist Dr. Irwin Mansdorf has observed, "While [suicide bombers] may feel oppressed, the stimulus for the act is nationalistic and political, not psychopathological and clinical. In the case of Islamic terror, [there is] the additional variable of becoming a shahid (martyr), with all its attendant religious rewards."

In fact, it is terrorist groups known for their outspoken religious and political agendas—like Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hizbollah and Al Qaeda—that claim credit for nearly every suicide bombing in Israel and around the world.

What do they say they want? Hamas and Islamic Jihad—as well as the young men and women they recruit as human bombs—make no secret of their goals. Indeed, Hamas' charter states that "Israel will exist . . . until Islam will obliterate it." Make no mistake: When well-meaning Westerners speak of Israeli "occupation," they generally refer to disputed territories in the West Bank. When Hamas and Islamic Jihad speak of occupation, they refer to all the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River—including all of present-day Israel. Even the official symbol of the Palestinian Authority depicts a map of the region in which there is no Israel.

It is telling that Palestinian suicide bombers never claim they are killing to achieve peace with Israel. Rather, they murder as a matter of honor, as a religious and political imperative—to rid the region of a people they see as infidels. Ultimately, of course, all jihadists—whether in Israel, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or Iran—seek to make the world, including the U.S., a fundamentalist Islamic dictatorship.

> ". . . they murder as a matter of honor, as a religious and political imperative—to rid the region of a people they see as infidels."

Can killing innocent civilians lead to peace? What is the military objective of randomly killing unarmed men, women and children as they dine, dance or celebrate religious events? It can only be to strike terror in the hearts of its victims, their families and their communities. We must ask: When has this barbaric tactic ever worked—when has it led to peace and freedom for its perpetrators? The answer is never—never in human history has terrorism succeeded as a military strategy. Yet the suicide bombings continue, even as Israel withdraws from Gaza and places more territory in the hands of Palestinians.

Why do Palestinian poverty and security restrictions continue? Suicide bombers never claim they kill innocents to solve the Palestinians' economic plight, but there's no doubt that Arabs in Gaza and the disputed territories suffer from heart-rending poverty, corruption, and political oppression. Billions of dollars have poured into the Palestinian Authority from the U.S., the U.N and European nations, but virtually none of this money has found its way to economic development—in fact, most of it has landed in the bank accounts of corrupt Palestinian politicians or to support terror operations. Indeed, to this day, the Palestinian Authority still makes reward payments to the families of suicide bombers. Now that the avowedly terrorist group Hamas has taken control of the Palestinian Authority, the world community must cut off this funding and limit aid strictly to humanitarian purposes.

Don't believe, either, that suicide bombers kill civilians to rid Israel of its security fence or to end its many security checkpoints, which cause great inconvenience and frustration for many Palestinians. Indeed, it is precisely to prevent murder by suicide bombers that Israel has instituted these stringent security measures. The good news is, they work.

What's the next step toward Arab-Israeli peace? Above all, Muslims must, as *New York Times* writer Anne Applebaum asserts, "change the culture that celebrates self-immolation and that sick form of honor and pride." Instead of glorifying suicide bombers, the Muslim world, on whose behalf these terrorists claim they are acting, must scorn their barbaric acts. Only then can we hope for peace . . . in Israel, in Iraq, and in the rest of the world.

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own spouses. But few had worked out the math, and even fewer appreciated the extent to which non-Europeans would take advantage of the opportunity to get into the United States. Immigration reform is a textbook example of how human behavior can have unanticipated consequences.

But 1960s-style immigration reform did not in a formal sense contribute to the dramatic rise of illegal immigration that followed its passage. That illegal immigration represented a major shift in American immigration patterns, and it had more to do with economic and technological changes than legal ones. A strong American economy linked to a weak Mexican one (which in turn was linked to high Mexican birth rates) was a contributing factor, as was an increasingly competitive version of American capitalism anxious to keep down wages. Cheaper long-distance calling, more sophisticated international networks, and eventually e-mail would allow illegal immigrants here to spread the word about job possibilities to people back home. Courts were more sympathetic to the rights of illegal immigrants than were legislative bodies, no doubt inducing more illegal immigrants to take the chance to get here.

In an odd way, the rise of illegal immigration became the best argument in favor of legal immigration. Nativist politicians who might once have attacked all immigrants could now offer a contrast between the hard-working good ones (who were legal) and the scurrilous, lawbreaking, welfare-draining ones (who were illegal). But backlash became inevitable once Americans began to recognize how the 1965 act and the rise of illegal immigration had changed the racial and ethnic composition of their society. The big surprise, therefore, is how difficult it has turned out to be to alter dynamics set in motion during the 1960s, given the more restrictionist mood in the half-century that followed. A senator and a congressman from states with minimal immigrant populations, Alan Simpson of Wyoming and Roman Mazzoli of Kentucky, managed to defeat hard-line restrictionists in 1986 by linking employer sanctions to limited amnesty. Yet Simpson-Mazzoli never really worked. Business tends to get what it wants in our political system, and so sanctions against business were rarely enforced and new arrivals continued their inflow. It also proved difficult to limit amnesty by rationing legal status among those seeking it, given the disposition of the courts to insist on the protection of individual rights. Simpson-Mazzoli did not stop the conflicting forces battling over immigration so much as it postponed the clash between them.

That clash is what we are experiencing now. Whatever action Congress takes in 2006, employer sanctions will not feature significantly in it. Just as they refuse to reconsider tax cuts, thereby forcing themselves into the corner of slashing popular programs to bring the budget under control, the House Republicans, intent on not imposing burdens on business, have forced themselves into a position of criminalizing illegal immigration in order to bring the border under control. Even if they retreat from this position in a future compromise, their toughness on immigration, despite widespread opposition to generous immigration policies among the public, is unlikely to be of much political help to them. Americans who (rightly) want the borders tightened also like to view their country (rightly) as a land of liberty. And Bush understands the politics of immigration much better than Dana Rohrabacher or Tom Tancredo: Republicans may well become a minority party if they alienate themselves from Latinos, the most rapidly growing group in the country. Why were the doors not shut? Zolberg asks. The answer seems obvious: so long as the doors are already open, and so long as some of those who come through them wind up voting, the doors are unlikely ever to be completely closed.

IV.

Since he identifies so strongly with the new field of American political development in the opening part of his book, I expected Zolberg to conclude with a discussion of what we can learn about the formation of the American state from a close historical examination of immigration policy. The one theme that emerges again and again in his historical discussion is the theme of contingency. Nothing about immigration has been historically determined in the United States. Instead, alliances formed and dissolved; people who felt one way on the issue came to feel another way at another time; advocates of racial purity kept trying to close the doors that business interests had opened; and reforms designed to solve certain problems invariably opened up others. In the spirit of American political development, especially its love of "path dependency," Zolberg's lesson is this: even if the past is not determined, it still limits what we can do in the present. Understanding the contingency of America's long history of immigration policy ought to lead us to avoid believing that order can be brought to chaos through any particular law or administrative action.

Yet when Zolberg comes to the end of his narrative, he surprisingly turns normative. Rather than explaining the past, he addresses the question of what America should do in the future. And he does so not by sticking close to the historical narrative he presents throughout the book, but by turning to age-old moral questions involving social justice. One obvious reason for this change of intellectual direction is autobiographical. Zolberg has the rare distinction of having once been a stateless person. The child of Polish Jews, he grew up in Belgium, which, unlike the United States and its tradition of *jus soli*, adhered to the European idea of *jus sanguinis*, making blood rather than soil the defining characteristic of citizenship. Zolberg arrived in the United States in 1948, at the age of seventeen. Like Hannah Arendt and other refugee scholars, whose own stateless condition informed their scholarship, Zolberg has personal as well as academic reasons for exploring the dynamics of immigration policy. *A Nation by Design* may well prove to be the last significant book written by a Jewish World War II refugee trying to explain America to the people who welcomed him.

There is one other overlap between Arendt and Zolberg. As he drifts away from American political development, Zolberg drifts toward the kind of philosophical questions addressed by Arendt—and more significantly, by her fellow native of Königsberg Immanuel Kant. How far do our obligations as human beings extend? No good liberal could ever conclude that they extend only to those with whom we share citizenship at any one point in time. Were we to opt for nationalism over cosmopolitanism, Zolberg argues, we "would require no less than the transformation of the United States and other affluent democracies into police states, protected by a new iron curtain or a Berlin wall." Political scientists rarely make good prophets, but this seems prophetic enough; Zolberg wrote his book before House

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Republicans decided to include in their bill a wall between Mexico and the United States. If it is true that once we chose to become a liberal democracy, a generous policy toward immigration followed, then to remain a liberal democracy, we will have to resist urges to privilege those already here over those who want to come here.

Yet Zolberg correctly points out that while there is a near-universal consensus in favor of the right of exit, there is no consensus at all on the right of entry. Consistency would suggest that once countries cannot prevent people from leaving, others should not prevent them from entering. But this is a false consistency. Following the philosopher Brian Barry, Zolberg points out that if nations admitted everyone who wanted to join them, there would soon be nothing valuable left to join. Cosmopolitanism must be tempered by realism. In this complicated world of difficult choices, the burden of proof, Zolberg concludes, should always be on those who want to close the borders. And for those who would keep them open, "priority must be given to those in greatest need, people who cannot survive in their country of origin because they are the target of persecution, because of life-threatening violence, or because there is no possible way of making a living." There is no one algorithm that we can apply to determine how many newcomers we can welcome. To live with immigration is to live with imperfection.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR current policy? Zolberg's cosmopolitan sympathies clearly suggest that we should continue to encourage immigrants to come here. In addition, we should, if I read him correctly, adopt ways—call them amnesty if you wish—to enable illegal immigrants currently in the United States to become citizens. But if we are also realists, we should not continue allowing vast numbers of illegal immigrants to come here. To work within the spirit of liberal realism that characterizes Zolberg's analysis, the best means of limiting future illegal immigration is not by walling off ourselves from the rest of the world. It means doing what Republicans will not do, and that is developing employer sanctions with teeth. (Whether Democrats, who are also dependent on business for campaign contributions, will do so is another matter.)

For the same reasons that liberals call for regulating the market generally, they must call for regulating the market in human labor more specifically. It is not humanitarian to allow business to search for the most exploitable workers it can find—soon Mexico will be far too expensive for them compared to, say, Thailand—and allow them to come here to work. Nor is it liberalism to watch the resulting market dynamics drive down wages for others, including those who have legal status in the United States. There is something ugly about criminalizing illegal aliens, rounding them up, and deporting them. But there is nothing ugly about demanding that private companies take more responsibility for the quality of life of the workers they employ.

Zolberg has been working on this book for three decades. One wants to say that his timing is nonetheless fortuitous, since his book appears right in the middle of one of the more contentious debates in American history over the immigration question. But then again, reading this book reminds us readers that in American history there have always been contentious debates over immigration policy; immigration is the issue that has never gone away and will never go away. A historian listening to Dana Rohrabacher or Ted Kennedy is likely to conclude that not much is new. That would be true, except for one thing: we now have in our hands a book so thoughtful, so extensively researched, and so balanced in its conclusions that if it does not inform both the current debate and the ones sure to follow, the debate is bound to be poorer even than it already is. ■

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anyone found this untoward, though the writer herself would surely have had serious reservations about publishing them. Eventually, however, a great artist becomes his admirers, as W. H. Auden said of Yeats; recognizing that Bishop is an essential part of our cultural patrimony, her executors have wisely chosen the path of candor and openness in approaching her literary remains, and our publication of this volume is in this spirit. (Other books of her work are planned, among them an edition of the complete correspondence between Bishop and her closest fellow poet, Robert Lowell.)

Accuracy, spontaneity, mystery—as Vendler points out, these were the qualities that Bishop admired most in poetry and strove to attain in her own writing. Watching Bishop at work here—seeing the substrate out of which her miraculous poems emerged, as Quinn allows us to with great sensitivity and tact—lets us ponder the strange alchemy that makes a great writer truly great. And this only deepens the wonder, making her achievement all the more mysterious and moving.

JONATHAN GALASSI
President and Publisher
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
New York, New York

HELEN VENDLER RESPONDS:
Of course drafts and fragments of significant poets can, should be, and are published—but they should be called (as, say, the corresponding Yeats drafts are called) "Manuscript Materials" and not "Uncollected Poems," which means complete and acknowledged works *published by the author* (in journals) but never republished in a volume. Bishop never published any of the poems in Quinn's edition (although the look of the book in size and jacket, uniform with that of *The Complete Poems*, makes them seem like equal parts of a finished and authorized body of work). And a rejected draft of fragment should not posthumously appear in a magazine over the signature "Elizabeth Bishop" as if it were an actual poem—as if it had the same status as an approved poem published over the author's signature in her lifetime. I don't know of any other dead poet who has been subjected to such a travesty.

I did not (and do not) object to the *fact* of presenting a dead author's drafts—how could I, since I use such instructive materials all the time. What I did object to was the *manner* of presentation in this case—the editor's attempt to blur the line between a draft and a finished poem, especially the printing of drafts in magazines *as* finished poems, a practice Jonathan Galassi does not address or defend, though it is of a piece with the attitude and claims informing the edition. Nor does he defend the bizarre absence of transcriptions of the handwritten drafts or other inadequacies that I mentioned. I so admire Galassi's edition of Montale that I wish he had been able to ensure that this edition was one of comparable quality. ■

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Pall of Fame

IT WAS A CALL THAT JOURNALISM school did not prepare me for. "This is Spencer," I said, picking up the phone at the New York *Daily News*. It was October 2003, and I was working as a reporter for the paper's main gossip column, "Rush & Molloy." Earlier that year, after finishing the graduate program at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication, I had taken an internship at the paper's business desk. Six months later, I had found my way to what seemed like a more exciting part of the paper. "Yeah, this is Chris Noth," said the actor best known as Mr. Big, Sarah Jessica Parker's love interest on "Sex and the City." "So, what is this bullshit you're writing? ... This is what you do with your life? You are fucking pathetic."

NOTH'S IRE STEMMED FROM THE FACT that we were reporting an item about his alleged behavior the night before at *Condé Nast Traveler*'s Reader's Choice awards gala. Upon departing from the event—where he had been a presenter—on his way to a waiting limousine, Noth had apparently patted an unsuspecting blonde on the derrière and invited her to go "for a ride." Covering the event that night, I had been standing among a clutch of attractive women in the hopes of leaving with, er, a story, when The Blonde came storming up to us to complain of the indecent proposal. The next day, I called Noth's publicist for comment, as was the practice. But, when his flack failed to get the item killed, Noth decided to take matters into his own hands. New to the world of gossip reporting, I had no snappy response to hurl back at him. "Just doing my job," I stammered.

OVER THE LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS, having worked for a number of other gossip columns and glossy magazines, I've come to know firsthand that Noth's sentiments about my "pathetic" line of work are not uncommon. And, if anyone had forgotten how "pathetic," "despicable," "immoral," and "unethical" the whole gossip trade is, his memory has surely been refreshed by the recent scandal involving Jared Paul Stern, a part-time writer for the *New York Post*'s "Page Six" column who allegedly tried to squeeze at least $200,000 out of California supermarket billionaire Ron Burkle in exchange for "protection."

STERN'S ATTEMPTED BLACKMAIL OF Burkle, if true, is indefensible and, in my experience, an aberration. But, unlike the scandals involving unethical non-gossip news reporters—Jayson Blair, anyone?—Stern's imbroglio was met with a collective, "Aha! We always knew it was that way!" The Stern scandal gave civilians and celebrities alike a delicious opportunity to vent at the entire gossip trade. Just the other day, my friend's beautiful older sister, whom I'd much prefer did not think my work was pathetic, said about gossip writers, "It's kind of like if a tree falls in the forest, did it make a noise, you know?" I'm still not exactly clear on what she meant, but it doesn't sound good.

AND, EVEN THOUGH CELEBS, MORE than ordinary people, understand the value of gossip for promoting their movies, perfume brands, et cetera, they still treat you like a bottom-feeder. I remember Philip Seymour Hoffman's body language, which suggested, "Slime, distance thyself from me," as I struggled to get him to sound off at a 2004 fashion week event. Chloë Sevigny, at the premiere of *Shattered Glass*, sneered, "Look at you, in your seersucker jacket asking me all these questions." At the T. J. Martell Foundation's awards gala, honoring great humanitarian deeds, the elder Barbara Bush looked me in the eye and bluntly told me to "get away" from her. And workplace hazards aren't limited to being manhandled by the Bushes' security detail. Stevie Wonder was also there that night. Interviewing him was a dangerous thing, because he bobs his head aggressively and unpredictably as he talks.

BUT, IN BETWEEN DODGING WONDER'S head and maneuvering through ego minefields, the job gives you a chance to cut celebs down to size through their own words and actions. This is the populist crusader side of it. Noth got his comeuppance when I printed some choice quotes from our conversation: "There were like 30 of the most beautiful girls there who were totally flirting with me," we quoted him as saying. "Why would I choose [that blonde]?" There is also, well, this: Two weeks ago, I was at the Beverly Hills Hotel's Polo Lounge with Harlequin heartthrob Fabio. Over lunch, he told me his surprisingly fascinating life story. It occurred to me then that there are *worse* jobs. He even gave me his secret to success: "I don't take myself too seriously."

THAT'S A GOOD WAY TO AVOID HYPOCrisy. After all, people may call gossip columns pathetic, but do they really want to know about a celebrity's uncouth pick-up tactics? The answer is a resounding yes. Celebrity news is a booming business. It is one of the only facets of print news media that is healthy and growing, which is why young journalists, whose ambitions often range beyond Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton, end up getting their feet wet in gossip. Sure, gossip is not straight journalism. Stories are written up with the necessary dose of cutesy alliteration, splashy innuendo, and, yes, an editorial spin. But, as with any other news, getting the story right and getting it first are the primary principles.

IN FACT, WHAT'S REALLY PATHETIC IS the way gossip writers are looked down upon by the same people for whom they serve a need—be it the public (with its voyeuristic curiosity) or celebrities (with their need to be in the public eye). It's kind of like Ron Burkle saying he values his privacy, then luring an ethically challenged "Page Six" writer into his elaborately bugged living room for three hours of conversation about purchasing tabloid immunity and handing the footage over to the *Post*'s tabloid rival, the *Daily News*.

INCIDENTALLY, JUST A FEW DAYS AFTER the so-called "Payola Six" scandal broke, I happened to be dining at Dan Tana's, a Hollywood restaurant long favored by celebrities and industry types. At a nearby table sat the 53-year-old business maven Burkle, wearing a black hooded sweater, jeans, and sneakers. He was at a table of hip, young people, wedged between the actress Kate Hudson and the model Sara Foster. To my eyes, he looked pretty pathetic. **SPENCER MORGAN**

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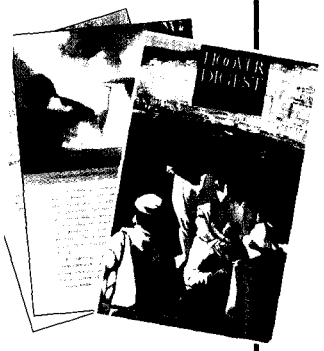

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In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

Who Lost Latin America?

Our strange indifference to events south of the border

Since the election of Hugo Chavez as president of Venezuela in 1998, there has been a drastic erosion of U.S. influence south of the Rio Grande. The most recent manifestations are the election victories of the coca-chewing populist Evo Morales in Bolivia and of the socialist Michelle Bachelet in Chile. And the anti-U.S. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador may very well be elected president of Mexico in July.

It's not as if the new populists in Latin America are trying to duck our attention. Recently Chavez declared, "I think Hitler would be like a suckling baby next to George W. Bush." If Chavez were a Muslim leader, this would be front-page news. But because he says it in Spanish, everyone yawns. Come on, folks. Chavez is sitting on top of 6.5 percent of the world's proven oil reserves.

—Niall Ferguson

A Star Is Born

Auf wiedersehen, Gerhard Schröder. Guten tag, Angela Merkel

Although the new German chancellor, Angela Merkel, has a lot of work to do to revive her country's economy, on foreign affairs she has already demonstrated a voice of moral seriousness and balanced judgment. Perhaps this has something to do with her coming of age in the police state of Erich Honeker's East Germany.

Consider, for example, Mrs. Merkel's response to Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: "The absolutely unacceptable provocations of the Iranian president demand a reply from us. No one who has questioned the right of Israel to exist and disavowed the existence of the Holocaust can expect Germany to show the least tolerance in these questions. We [Germans] have learned from our history."

—Tod Lindberg

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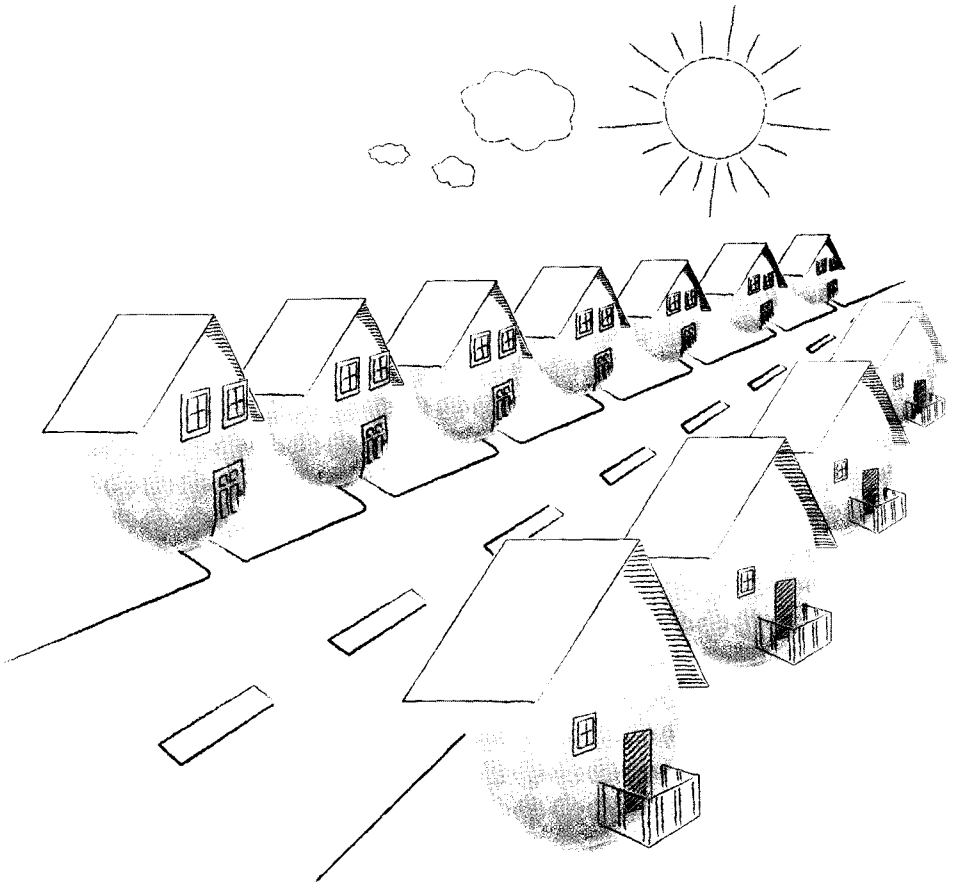

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